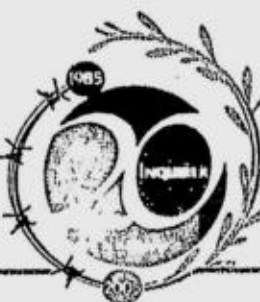


Super's 3rd anniversary season starts: From army of 'me' to army of 'we'

Benguet judge rules cops can't justify warrantless arrests of 11 youths

Retirement villages for foreigners to earn \$40B, generate 4M jobs

'Isn't It Romantic?': Sharon's new slick CD fabulous with her emotive power, sincerity



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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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RP cop hurt in E. Timor; 200 Pinoys alerted for evacuation

By Nikko Dizon

THE PHILIPPINES YESTERDAY ALERTED THE military on the possibility of evacuating about 200 Filipinos from East Timor after four days of violence in the world's youngest nation left 20 people dead and many wounded, including a Filipino police officer.

Chief Inspector Edgar Layon, 45, of Sta. Mesa, Manila, was shot in the stomach on Thursday

RP COP/A6

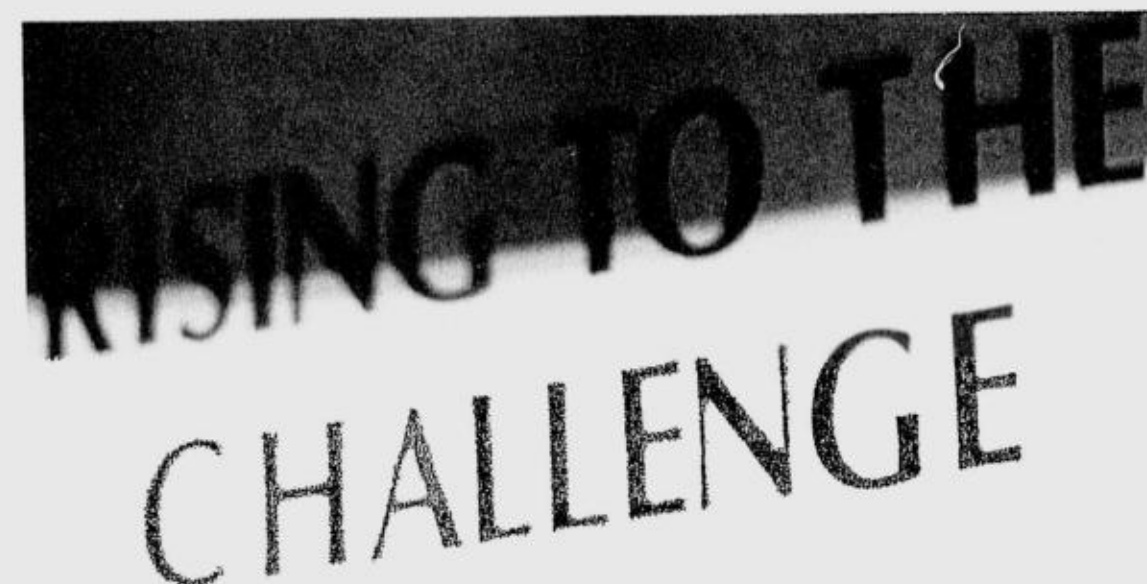
US Senate OKs bill to allow foreign workers legal status

WASHINGTON—THE US SENATE ADOPTED ON Thursday (Friday in Manila) sweeping reforms of an immigration law that will allow millions of undocumented workers to seek legal status in the United States.

Most controversial is a provision that would allow many of the estimated 11.5 million foreign workers here illegally, many of them Mexican, to gain legal status.

US SENATE/A4

'Like cutting deal with Hitler's men'

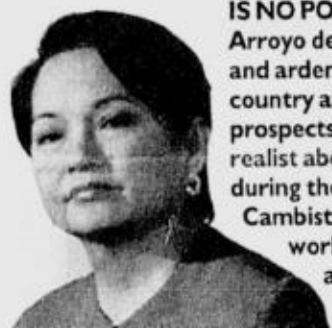


GMA RP'S BEST SALESWOMAN IS NO POLLYANNA

President Arroyo declares she is a "proud and ardent saleswoman" for the country and is bullish about its prospects but at the same time is a realist about national problems during the 45th Association Cambiste Internationale (ACI), a world congress of financial analysts held at the PICC.

(Story on Page A7)

LYN RILLON



Salonga hits PCGG's compromise with Marcoses

By Norman Bordadora

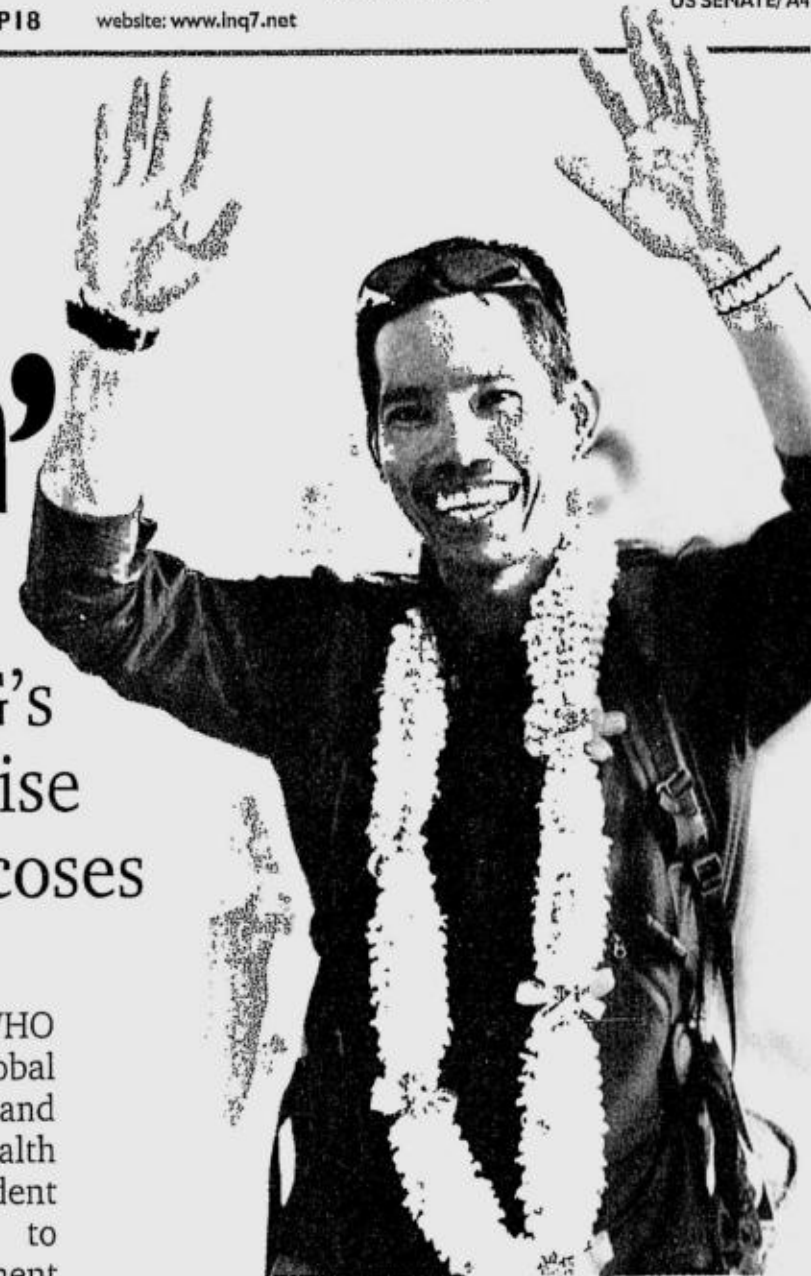
THE MAN WHO launched the global search for Ferdinand Marcos' hidden wealth has urged President Macapagal-Arroyo to pull out of settlement talks with the Marcoses, and said striking a compromise with them would be like the Holocaust victims cutting a deal with Hitler's Nazis.

"The victims of the Holocaust hounded the Nazi war criminals wherever they went. The criminals were pursued until... the last one of them was sentenced," former Senate President Jovito Salonga said in an interview yesterday.

"The Holocaust victims hounded the war criminals to the very end. That took more than 50 years. We're just into our 20th year."

Salonga was the first chair of the Presidential Commission on Good Government formed in 1986 by then President Corazon Aquino to track down assets

LIKE CUTTING/A6



JESS YUSON

"IT IS INSPIRING TO INSPIRE," Romi Garduce says on arrival. Bewildered by his instant celebrity, he shyly responds to his rousing welcome at the Naia. Next stop for the adventurer: The South Pole.

Third on Everest but first in Manila

By Alcuin Papa and Nikko Dizon

HE MAY NOT HAVE BEEN THE first to reach the summit of Mt. Everest, but Romi Garduce still came home a winner.

The nation's most accomplished mountaineer arrived home yesterday to a warm welcome from his countrymen and from officials of GMA 7, the television network that supported his climb.

Garduce reached the summit of Mt. Everest last May 19, two days after Leo Oracion and Erwin "Pastor" Emata, two other Filipino

climbers from the First Philippine Mt. Everest Expedition (FPME), achieved the feat.

GMA 7 news director Jessica Soho said the network was impressed with Garduce's humility and decision not to turn the climb into a race.

"He has always been humble despite his amazing, fantastic credentials. His demeanor did not change during the expedition, even with the talk that this was turning out to be a race. We admire and respect his decision that he did not want to race," Soho said.

THIRD/A8

Why Enron bosses were convicted

HOUSTON—KENNETH LAY MAY have paved his way to prison when he testified in his own defense, snarling at a prosecutor and telling a jury of middle-class men and women that he couldn't turn off his rich lifestyle "like a spigot," despite \$100 million in personal debt.

Jeffrey Skilling may have guaranteed himself a string of convictions when he couldn't counter incriminating testimony from prosecution witnesses with more than, "It's not true."

In one of the greatest corporate scandals in US history, former Enron Corp. chiefs Lay and Skilling were convicted on Thursday of fraud and conspiracy and could spend the rest of their lives in prison.

The Lay and Skilling convictions bring to 19 the number of Enron executives who pleaded guilty or have been found guilty of crimes.

The verdict capped a bitter four-month trial that was the culmination

of the government's years-long effort to punish them for their roles in the stunning 2001 collapse of Enron, which shook the country's faith in corporate America and led to new corporate governance regulations.

"The jury sent an unmistakable message: You can't lie to shareholders. No matter how rich and powerful, you must play by the rules," prosecutor Sean Berkowitz said.

WHY ENRON/A6

SENATE PROBE

Pro-Erap 5 blame GMA for abduction

By TJ Burgonio and Luige A. del Puerto

"IS THERE NO SAFETY FOR ORDINARY citizens like us? Is there no security? What kind of government is this?"

These were the questions raised by Virgilio Eustaquio, chair of the Union of the Masses for Democracy and Justice, after he and four other members of the group linked to former President Joseph Estrada were freed Thursday night from their detention by the military.

Looking grim and sounding traumatized, four of the men showed up yesterday at a press briefing at the Senate and said they were holding President Macapagal-Arroyo liable for their abduction and detention by military intelligence agents.

They attended the Senate plenary debate on the budget of the Department of National Defense and witnessed senators grill Armed Forces officials on the incident through Sen. Manuel Villar Jr.

The five men were picked up Monday from a house in Quezon

City, held incommunicado without warrants and released on "insufficient evidence" Thursday night.

"Since Ms Arroyo has made no bones about being the Commander in Chief, she should be liable for this," Eustaquio said at the briefing.

"It seems like a coincidence that the head of the Isafp (Intelligence Service of the AFP) is a relative of Gloria Arroyo's," he added on hindsight, referring to Commodore Leonardo Calderon. "I'm not surprised this has happened to us."

On the floor, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and Sen. Jinggoy Estrada demanded that AFP public information chief Col. Tristan Kison apologize for misleading the public on the whereabouts of Eustaquio, Ruben Dionisio, Jim Lucio Cabautan, Dennis Ibuna and PO3 Jose Justo Curameng.

Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz and AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga stood by Kison, saying it was his "judgment call" whether to apologize. But Cruz said he had ordered the Isafp Inspector General to submit a report.

PRO-ERAP/A4



Erap gets credit for bigger carabaos

By Norman Bordadora

WHO'S GOT THE LAST laugh now?

They laughed at then Sen. Joseph Estrada, to include even some of his colleagues in the Senate, for what was perceived as his over exertions over the one and only law he authored in the Senate that had to do with the carabao.

The sense was that Estrada was making much ado

ERAP/A4



ENDANGERED PAIR. Boy from Thailand's ethnic tribe Karen lies beside a fish caught from the Salween river near the Thai-Burma border, which runs through a remote, stunningly beautiful and ecologically undisturbed area inhabited by minority groups now in danger of intrusions from their neighbors' economic planners.

AP

Gov't bars Satur from leaving for Indonesia

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE CABINET OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE on internal security (Cocis) has barred Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo from leaving for Jakarta to speak before a global anti-foreign debt conference.

The militant party-list lawmaker had been scheduled to fly to the Indonesian capital at 8:30 a.m. yesterday on Singapore Airlines, but was informed by Immigration Commissioner Alipio Fernandez that he might be prevented from leaving the airport.

"I made it very clear to them that I will return after three days, so what are they so afraid of?" Ocampo told the INQUIRER.

Ocampo, along with the rest of the "Batasan 5," as well as another militant party-list lawmaker, Anakpawis Rep. Crispin Beltran, is fighting charges of rebellion filed before a Makati regional trial court.

They are accused of involvement in the alleged Left-Right plot to grab

GOV'T/A8



WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms mostly in the afternoon or evening. SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, PDI RESEARCH/05/26/06

Manila Partly Cloudy
Baguio Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao Partly Cloudy
Lanao Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay Partly Cloudy
Legazpi Partly Cloudy
Calapan Partly Cloudy

Iloilo/Bacolod Cloudy with Rains
Roxas Partly Cloudy
Cebu Cloudy with Rains
Tacloban Cloudy with Rains
Gen. Santos Cloudy with Rains
Zamboanga Cloudy with Rains
Cagayan de Oro Cloudy with Rains
Davao Cloudy with Rains

Luisita hits gov't for deception

THE HACIENDA LUISITA INC. yesterday accused the government of misleading the farmer-beneficiaries of the Cojuangco estate into thinking that they would get their share of the sprawling sugar plantation next month.

HLI spokesperson Vigor Mendoza II said the Department of Agrarian Reform had told the Supreme Court in a manifestation submitted on Feb. 15 that the DAR would not yet parcel out the hacienda under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program despite the revocation of its stock scheme.

Citing the DAR's manifestation, Mendoza said DAR legal counsel Delfin Samson told the Supreme Court that there was no need for a temporary restraining order against the CARP coverage of Luisita because Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser C. Pangandaman had ordered the regional office to suspend the coverage.

"If Samson's claim is true, Pangandaman is practically raising false hopes of the FWBs (farmer worker beneficiaries). This is... not good for the agrarian situation here. If not (misleading the FWBs), Pangandaman was misleading the Supreme Court. This is not good either," Mendoza said in a statement.

Pangandaman, however, said he ordered the suspension of coverage of Luisita months ago only because the Presidential Agrarian Reform Council, had not yet ruled on the motion for reconsideration of the HLI.

"That was before, but it has been lifted," Pangandaman told the INQUIRER.

"We said we will slow down with the process first because of the HLI's filing for a temporary restraining order but the PARC has already decided to deny the HLI's motion so we're pushing through with it," he said.

Blanche S. Rivera

Special CARP team for Negros

To avoid violence between farmers, landowners

By Blanche S. Rivera

AGRARIAN REFORM BENEFICIARIES YESTERDAY urged the government to form a special team to implement the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program in Negros Occidental after a group of landowners warned there would be violence if the farm workers are forcibly installed in their lands.

Task Force Mapalad, an organization of farm workers in 300 haciendas in the province, made the proposal at a meeting last Thursday with Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor and Department of Agrarian Reform officials.

The group said the team should be composed of people from the DAR central office because they claimed that local DAR officials in Negros were either "paralyzed" by fear or were "conniving" with the landowners.

"They [local DAR officials] have become the mouthpiece of the landowners. They do not have a firm stand, always employing delaying tactics," said

TFM national campaigns coordinator Lanie Factor.

She accused DAR personnel in Negros of passing on information to the landowners concerning DAR's plans to install the farmer beneficiaries, giving the rich owners of sugar lands time to prepare for and block the attempts.

The Coalition of Landowners of the Philippines (CLP), which is based in Bacolod City, issued a resolution on April 20 opposing the appointment of Agrarian Reform Undersecretary Narciso Nieto who they said was aggressively "engineering forced installations" of farmer beneficiaries.

"The CLP sees these attempts

to forcibly install disputed ARBs to be premature and serves only to sow dissension and create violence on the ground resulting in loss of lives, damage to property and reduced agricultural production," the CLP said in its Resolution No. 1 series of 2006.

Nieto said he was merely doing his job as DAR field operations chief. He has been conducting dialogues with various farmers' groups in the disputed land distributions and assisting those legitimate holders of certificates of land ownership award (CLOA) who have yet to be installed.

Early this month, the DAR announced that it was prepared to enlist the help of police and the military in implementing the CARP in those areas where there is armed resistance by the landowners.

It said intervention of government armed units would be sought in agrarian reform "hot spots," or areas where there is strong, even violent, resistance by landowners. Negros is among the hot spots identified by the DAR.



POLICE officers push back protesters who tried to get closer to the US Embassy in Manila for a "lightning protest" Friday May 26, against the recent expansion of security agreement between the Philippines and the United States. The protesters also demanded the scrapping of the Visiting Forces Agreement, VFA, which allows US troops back to Philippine soil for large-scale joint military exercises.

New RP-US security pact needs no ratification – DND chief

THE NEW SECURITY PACT WITH THE United States is not a basing agreement and therefore does not require Senate ratification, according to Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz.

Cruz said the new security arrangement was just a mechanism for consultation on "non-traditional" security concerns such as terrorism, crime, maritime safety and security, disasters and epidemics, including the

dreaded avian flu.

"It is not a basing agreement. It is just a mechanism for the Philippines and the United States to consult [each other] on what areas in nontraditional concerns should be explored for cooperation," Cruz told reporters at the Senate where he attended hearings on the defense department's budget.

The new accord, announced earlier this

week, involves the setting up of a joint consultative panel called the Security Engagement Board to be chaired jointly by the Philippine Armed Forces Chief of Staff and the US Commander in Chief of the Pacific Command.

Cruz explained that the SEB was a "mirror" of the RP-US Mutual Defense Board, the consultative body for the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty with the US that calls for battling ex-

ternal security threats in either country.

The government has said the security arrangement is part of the Visiting Forces Agreement, which governs the conduct of joint US military exercises in the Philippines.

The pact will have the effect of broadening the scope of the joint exercises to deal with threats such as terrorism, crime, disasters and epidemics not covered under the Mutual Defense Treaty. *Juliet Labog-Javellana and AP*

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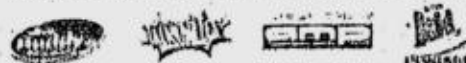
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SMART

Pro-Erap 5 blame GMA for abduction

From page A1

The P45-billion DND budget, which had been tied up by the senators' grilling of military officials on the incident since Thursday night, was deemed submitted yesterday on the condition that the military brass submit its report on Monday.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, chair of the committee on national defense, set an inquiry into the incident for Tuesday.

Names unknown

Eustaquio, Cabauatan, Ibuna and Curameng turned up for the 11 a.m. briefing at the Tañada conference room, accompanied by Senators Estrada and Sergio Osmeña III.

Dionisio, 60, who had earlier said he was tortured and showed reporters marks on his body, was in a Metro Manila hospital, his sister Elvira Lleva told the INQUIRER.

"Our primary concern now is his health," Lleva said.

"We have consulted our lawyers; they're preparing charges," said the 47-year-old Eustaquio, in whose Quezon City house the warrantless arrests were made.

He added: "As to who will be charged, that's the problem. We don't know their names; we can't recall their faces. Things happened so fast."

"But I think it will be easy to get this information because it has been reported in the papers that we were in Isafp custody."

Senator Estrada later said on the floor that the five men would file criminal and administrative charges against Calderon "for authorizing the operation," the arresting agents, and Kison "for trying to cover it up."

During the Thursday night debates on the DND budget, AFP officials admitted that members of the Isafp's Military Intelligence Group 15 carried out the operation.

The AFP officials divulged the identities of the agents to the senators during yesterday's executive session, while the press briefing was ongoing.

Later at the plenary debates on the DND budget at past 1 p.m., Estrada again raised the issue by focusing on Kison's denial that

the five were in Isafp custody and admission 48 hours later.

"He must apologize to the Filipino people, whom he misled," the senator said. "If we have a public information officer who is misleading the public, I don't think he has any place in the [AFP]."

Hearing the punches

At a press conference held at Eustaquio's house shortly after all five men were freed on Thursday night, details of alleged physical and mental torture were told.

Eustaquio, Ibuna, Cabauatan and Curameng confirmed that Dionisio, the oldest among them and the one tagged as a ranking official of the Communist Party of the Philippines in Metro Manila, got the worst of the beatings.

Even at the press conference, Dionisio was absent. He had trouble walking, Eustaquio said.

Ibuna said that on the night of their arrest, he could hear the punches landing on Dionisio's body and the latter's pleas for respite.

"I was closest to Ruben [in the place where we were taken]. His cries, the questions asked of him, the punches and beating—they made up the worst kind of torture. And I who could hear it felt I was more of a victim than he was ... because there was nothing I could do about it," Ibuna said.

"It went on the whole night. They didn't allow you to go to sleep. If you did, they hit you. You have to hear the cries of your friend," he said.

Cold place, hot place

Eustaquio said he and his friends were disoriented and could not tell night from day because they were blindfolded.

Each could not tell what had happened to the others, he said. They did not know who took them, and they were being made to admit they were part of a communist hit squad in the capital.

Within what Eustaquio assumed to be one day, his abductors moved him three times.

"They brought us to a cold place and a hot place. We were brought to a windy place, to a grass land. This was the mental torture. We could smell gasoline.

We could touch cold hands. We could not understand what was happening," he said, adding:

"The first time I saw the light of day [since Monday] was when we were brought to the DOJ (Department of Justice)."

Eustaquio recalled that when they had a chance to talk, Dionisio told him the beating stopped only when he said he would admit to being a CPP official.

"They gave him good food to eat, but when they asked him the composition of the [CPP] in Metro-Rizal and naturally he could not answer, the beating started again," Eustaquio said.

'Like a dog'

Jim Cabauatan said he ate blindfolded "like a dog" throughout his detention.

He said he was made to hear all

sorts of noises, including the sound of something being chopped to pieces.

Cabauatan, whose brother is a retired military official, said he could not eat well during his arrest because his hands were tied.

"You were blindfolded and could not see the food," he said. "I asked them to loosen the binding on my hands, and they did a little. I had to keep my face very close to the plate."

They kept him moving, he said.

Once, he was brought to what seemed like farmland, where he heard someone cutting grass, sharpening a blade, and hammering at something.

"It came to a point that I said, 'Sir, please have pity. Don't leave me here. I don't want to die,'" he

recalled. "I could stand the physical torture, but the mental torture hurt too much."

Victim of circumstances

Among the five men, it was most difficult for Curameng, a member of the Quezon City Police, to accept what had happened.

He described himself as a victim of circumstances—a personal friend of Eustaquio's who had dropped in that fateful Monday afternoon to chat.

Curameng said that when the military agents stormed the house, he introduced himself as a cop and asked who they were.

"They told me to hit the ground, and when I insisted on asking for their identities, someone stepped on my face and

head," he said, adding:

"What I could not accept is that a cop [like me] had to experience something as harrowing as that. If that could happen to me, how much more to those who can't defend themselves?"

But although the experience left him terrified, Curameng said, his faith in the police and the military had not wavered.

"There may be just a few of them [doing these bad things]. [I believe] the military and police are still ready to serve the people," he said.

Curameng wondered how security forces could have accused him of being a communist when his brother was a military sergeant.

"I fight criminals, and he fights subversives and rebels," Curameng said.

Erap gets credit for bigger carabaos

From page A1

over nothing. He was not making sense and they laughed behind his back.

The Philippine Carabao Act, or Republic Act No. 7307, was enacted into law in March 1992, just a few months before Estrada ran as Eduardo Cojuangco's running mate and won as vice president.

Estrada yesterday made sure he got credit for the law that has resulted in the success of the country's carabao program.

PDI failed to mention Erap

"I was the one who authored the bill," Estrada told the INQUIRER of the law that created the Philippine Carabao Center after reading the INQUIRER's Thursday issue that carabaos bred at the center are heavier and meatier than native carabaos and females produce 10 times more milk.

The INQUIRER article on the great strides made at the Philippine Carabao Center in Science City, Muñoz, Nueva Ecija, pleased Estrada except that it failed to mention that he authored the Carabao Act.

Estrada expressed pride over the accomplishment made by the PCC, created by the Philippine Carabao Act of 1992. Estrada

sponsored the bill in the Senate while then Bataan Rep. Felicito Payumo sponsored it in the House of Representatives.

'White Revolution'

"I was helped by Senator (Leticia Ramos) Shahani. She was the coauthor. Now, we again have a project called White Revolution in reference to the program's objective of having increased milk production by carabaos," Estrada added.

Estrada said that before the carabao enhancement law was passed, Filipino farmers across the country had to content themselves with a liter of milk per water buffalo.

When the cross-breeding program of the center commenced and started producing their own carabaos, the female species were already producing at least twice as much milk. The carabao beef also improved as the buffaloes were meatier and heavier.

"The income of the farmers doubled," Estrada said.

Agri/educational

Estrada also made sure that the dispersal of the center's crossbred carabaos would be administered by agricultural education institutions, not the Department of Agriculture.

"If it was the DA that would handle the dispersal, those more influential could cause more crossbred carabaos delivered to their areas. I saw to it that that won't happen," Estrada said.

Carabao named Glory

Ten years after the law was enacted, the PCC's test tube technique in carabao reproduction resulted in the birth of "Glory," a 44-kilo water buffalo that can produce as much as 14 liters of milk a day.

Glory was ironically named after President Macapagal-Arroyo who succeeded Estrada following the latter's ouster caused in January 2001.

One of the succeeding calves, however, was named Erap after Estrada. There were also calves named Fidel and Cory after former Presidents Fidel Ramos and Corazon Aquino.

'Carabao English'

Estrada said he was ribbed by Sen. John Osmeña when he was pushing for the carabao bill in the Senate.

"Sonny Osmeña said Erap was being aggressive in pushing for the carabao bill because of one thing. You know what that is? It's because he speaks carabao English," Estrada said, managing to laugh at his reputation of speaking less than good English.

US Senate OKs bill to allow foreign ...

From page A1

The bill passed 62-36 despite deep divisions within the majority Republican Party

and among Americans.

The Senate bill has the bipartisan support of Republican Sen. John McCain and Democratic Sen. Edward Kennedy as well as the backing of Republican President George W. Bush.

Senators wrapped up two months of debate on the reforms Bush has sought for more than two years. The bill aims to stem illegal immigration but welcome illegal immigrants who have already been integrated into US society.

Bush saluted passage of the text and said effective immigration reforms must address both economic and border security needs and "honor America's great tradition of the melting pot."

"I look forward to working together with both the House of Representatives and the Senate to produce a bill for me to sign into law," he said.

However, the bill's final adoption is hardly guaranteed, as it differs sharply from a tougher bill passed in the lower House of Representatives, and the two must be reconciled.

"Today is not the day to celebrate. We have won a big battle but not the war," Senate Democratic leader Harry Reid said.

The Senate bill would create 200,000 temporary work visas for foreigners who take low-skill jobs here, and double the number of US Border Patrol agents on the border with Mexico.

The bill also includes funding to build a 600-km wall along the Mexican border to block illegal entry.

The consequences of reform are so great for both countries that Mexican President Vicente Fox was on a three-day visit to the United States to discuss immigration and labor with US business and political leaders.

"This is a historic day, one to celebrate," Fox told Mexican broadcasters from his presidential jet, in response to the Senate vote.

"It is a wonderful day for the United States and Mexico, but especially for Mexicans in the United States and their families."

The US Chamber of Commerce also welcomed the text.

"This bill constitutes a sound bipartisan legislative blueprint which addresses both the security and economic needs of the country," its vice president, Randel Johnson, said in a statement.

Amnesty

It is derided by some as an "amnesty."

"The problem with this bill is that it is an amnesty bill, or a legalization bill, that I think is just fundamentally unfair to millions of people waiting around the world trying to get into this country legally, as well as the millions who have come into this country and waited and paid dearly, I might add, to come into this country legally," Sen. Rick Santorum said.

Not so, according to Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, who said, "We've taken a bill that the American people would have concluded was amnesty and by my lights, we took the amnesty out while we put the security in."

Senators will have difficulty bringing their bill into line with a much tougher version passed by the House in December. The House would make unapproved US entry a federal crime and bolster border security.

Immigrant rights activists and religious officials fiercely oppose it.

Los Angeles Cardinal Roger Mahony said the Senate bill contained "objectionable provisions" but was nevertheless "an important step toward achieving effective immigration reform in our nation that is just, fair and humane."

Hot issue in elections

Immigration is likely to be a particularly hot issue during mid-term elections in November and some Republican proponents worry that its failure could prove very costly on the campaign trail.

The House bill has sparked some of the largest protests in recent US history, with millions of predominantly Hispanic demonstrators taking to the streets in major American cities since late March to defend their contribution to US society and the economy.

"The American people may have different views as to how we should address this issue, but I think all of them think we ought to address it," said McCain.

AFP

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Correction

IN THE MAY 24 issue, the story—"Saving Paoay's old 'Duque House'"—on Page A20 stated that Constancio Duque had saved his stipend from a seminary to buy a "plane ticket" for the United States in the early 1900s. According to Duque's eldest daughter, Rosario Duque-Pobre, her father went to the United States in 1918 by taking a ship, not a plane. Duque and other Ilocanos boarded the ship that took them to the United States at Port Salomague in Ilocos Sur. In the same story, the ownership of one of the "Bahay na Bato" in the town was erroneously attributed to the family of Supreme Court Associate Justice Conchita Carpio-Morales. That house, which is next to the ancestral home of the family of Carpio-Morales, is owned by the Claros-Diaz family.

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascarido Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

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De Venecia endorses \$503-M NorthRail project

By Philip C. Tubeza

HOUSE SPEAKER JOSE DE VENECIA on Thursday pushed for the controversial \$503 million Northrail transit system, which is now under Senate investigation for alleged irregularities.

De Venecia maintained that his role in the project was aboveboard and that he had been publicly discussing the Philippine railway modernization program for years.

Besides China, he said, he had also invited South Korea, Austria, Germany and Saudi Arabia to participate "because we need simultaneous, not sequential, development of the rail systems in Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao."

The Speaker's name was again linked to the rail project on Tuesday after NorthRail Corp. president Jose Cortes told the Senate that De Venecia hosted meetings between government officials and Chinese Embassy representatives in his Makati residence.

But De Venecia said everyone

knew that there were only two venues for his meetings—at the Speaker's office in Congress when the House of Representatives is in session and at his Makati residence. "This has been my practice since 1987," he said.

Unlike the existing one-track system, the project is a double-track system that will lay more than 62 kilometers of track estimated to ferry 350,000 commuters daily.

The project is funded by a \$400-million loan from the Chinese government with the Philippines providing \$100 million as its counterpart fund.

When it was launched last year, Minister Xiao Qian of the Chinese Embassy had called it the "largest Chinese project in Southeast Asia," and the first 20-year concessionary loan ever extended by China to any government.

De Venecia said the government was also pushing for a Visayan rail system possibly with support from the German, Austrian and Saudi governments.

SUBIC RAPE CASE

Court to hold hearings 4x a week

By Tarra V. Quismundo

HEARINGS ON THE RAPE CASE filed by a Filipino woman against four US Marines would be held four times a week starting June 2 in a bid to conclude the trial at the soonest possible time.

Working under time pressure, Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 139 Judge Benjamin Pozon yesterday raised from three to four times a week the frequency of hearings on the Subic rape case.

The hearings would be held Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

"As of now, with the number of witnesses to be presented and the possibility of the presentation of rebuttal and sur-rebuttal witnesses, the court is not taking any chances. The offended party has a right, the accused have their rights," said Pozon, during a pre-trial conference yesterday afternoon.

Pozon made the adjustment when he counted that at least 51 settings be made to accommodate the presentation of all prosecution and defense witnesses.

The change in schedule took into consideration the time needed for possible rebuttal proceedings.

The prosecution intends to present 44 witnesses to prove that the four accused—Staff Sgt. Chad Brian Carpentier, Lance Cpls. Keith Silkwood, Dominic Duplantis and Daniel Smith—conspired to rape a Filipino woman on board a moving van inside the Subic Bay Freeport on Nov. 1 last year.

The court aims to wrap up the prosecution's presentation of evidence and witnesses within three months.

The defense, meanwhile, said in open court that they would present at least seven witnesses, including the four accused.

"That's humanly cruel for us to

spend the days just doing this case. We have to prepare for the case, talk to witnesses. It's going to be bad for prosecution. We do not object to a speedy trial but it should be a reasonable schedule," said private prosecutor Evelyn Ursua, whose objection to the new schedule was denied by Pozon.

"Why are we having this kind of schedule? This is not for us Filipinos."

It is for the Americans, because of this VFA (Visiting Forces Agreement). This is basically imposing constraints on the prosecution such that in the end, our case will be prejudiced," she added.

The VFA, an RP-US agreement that allowed troops from both nations to engage in joint military exercises, imposed a one-year deadline for Philippine courts to conclude proceedings against US servicemen.

Pozon has yet to rule on the prosecution's question seeking its

position on when the countdown on the one-year-period began. The prosecution remained believed it should begin from April 28 when the accused were arraigned. For the defense, the countdown began on Dec. 27 last year, when the case was filed in court.

The victim's mother, meanwhile, said she was pleased with the progress of the case, adding: "I am happy that the case is set to begin. I hope this would be continuous. And I hope many people would support her."

During yesterday's proceedings, Pozon asked the prosecution if other witnesses could be dropped from its list, as some may be testifying on the same facts. But prosecution lawyers maintained that they should not be restricted from presenting all witnesses they deemed necessary to prove their case, as they had the burden of proving the alleged rape.

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'Like cutting deal with Hitler's men'

From page A1
owned by Marcos and his cronies after the dictator was ousted in a People Power revolt.

He was reacting to moves by PCGG Commissioner Ricardo Abcede, apparently with Malacañang's support, to negotiate a compromise with the Marcos family over Marcos-linked assets variously estimated at between \$5 billion and \$10 billion.

In an open letter to Ms Arroyo published by his group's magazine Kilos-bayan, Salonga called on the President to order the PCGG commissioners to pull out of negotiations with the Marcoses.

"Despite our boast that we are the only Christian country in Asia, the Philippines is already known to be among the most corrupt in Asia and the rest of the world," Salonga said in his letter.

Sense of right, wrong

"A compromise agreement, such as has been outlined by PCGG Commissioner Abcede, will surely make us the most

notoriously corrupt among Asian nations and a pariah to the whole international community."

Salonga told the INQUIRER there were fundamental issues at stake.

"You can't give up the moral sense of right and wrong ... If we enter a compromise agreement with the Marcoses, we'd be showing that crime pays."

Salonga took exception to Abcede's argument that after 20 years, it was time to negotiate a settlement with the Marcos family.

"Allow me to say that questions of right or wrong do not fade away or disappear after 20 or 50 years," Salonga said.

"Up to now, the Marcoses are telling the people they have no more money and yet the Marcoses are saying they can pay off the country's foreign and domestic debts," Salonga said, referring to a boast once made by former first lady Imelda Marcos.

She has also said the Marcos family has so much wealth that she no longer knows extent of its total assets.

"Where did they get all this money? If your legitimate income is P10 million and your total assets are worth more than twice your legitimate income, the proof is on you to say that all these are legitimate acquisitions," Salonga said.

Lost evidence

The PCGG cannot use the excuse that some of the documentary pieces of evidence against the Marcoses had been lost through the years.

He said the Marcos documents used by the PCGG in its cases versus the family were "duplicate originals" or photocopies that may still be presented as valid pieces of evidence. If these were lost, the originals are still in the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, he said.

"There is also a set of duplicate originals that I brought to the Bank of Philippine Islands," Salonga said.

Salonga, however, said he no longer knew what had become of the duplicate originals inside the BPI vault. He said he gave the key to the documents' vault to his successor, Ramon Diaz, who has since died.

Evidence in USA

"For good measure, another set of duplicate originals are with PCGG lawyers in California. They computerized and classified these documents," he added.

Salonga said the proposed out-of-court settlement with the Marcoses also faced serious legal obstacles.

"It is completely against the 1998 decision of the Supreme Court penned by then Associate Justice and now Supreme Court Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban," Salonga said, referring to the SC ruling striking down the PCGG's first compromise deal with the Marcoses.

The Supreme Court, at that time, ruled that the provision in the agreement about the government causing dismissal of court cases against the Marcoses "is an encroachment on judicial powers, partic-

ularly in regard to criminal jurisdiction."

The high court also said that a deal with the Marcoses would be a warrant for public officials to amass public funds illegally "since there is an open option to compromise their liability in exchange for only a portion of their ill-gotten wealth."

Change of tack

Abcede, for his part, indicated he would now talk less about the Marcos issue.

"I intend to keep my silence on these matters after this one last statement, after which I will be inclined to talk about reconciliation or settlement issues only when public interest so demands," Abcede told reporters yesterday.

He said he would invest "all of my waking hours on legitimate, backbreaking official work, to help pump badly needed funds into government coffers, rather than to fritter away time speaking in my defense."

"My inviting Mrs. Marcos to my party was my way of announcing to the world that the former first lady and I were indeed in good enough terms to jointly embark on a possible amicable settlement on the disputed Marcos wealth. Mrs. Marcos was gracious enough to ask me for a dance and I was civil enough to accept," Abcede said.

Abcede promised to keep the people informed not only of "the final terms of any settlement that may be arrived at, but also of the twists and turns that develop on our way to that possible settlement." With a report from Alcuin Papa

No deal, says FVR

By Cynthia D. Balana

FORMER PRESIDENT FIDEL RAMOS strongly opposed a compromise on the Marcos assets.

At a press conference, Ramos said that while entering into a compromise was a normal negotiating procedure, this should not apply to criminal cases.

"There must be no negotiation or settlement in regard to the criminal cases. That's nonnegotiable," he said. "In regard to return or restoration or discovery or acquisition of the wealth, I have no comment because I am not up-to-date on that."

Ramos reminded the PCGG that it had been mandated by the Constitution and the law to pursue the ill-gotten wealth of the Marcoses, the proceeds of which should go to the land reform program.

He said that in 1997, when he was still president, \$350 million of the so-called hidden wealth of the Marcoses were turned over to the government through negotiations with Switzerland, not with the Marcoses.

"Every effort should be exerted to bring in more of the hidden wealth," Ramos stressed. "The principle, to begin with, is that that is public money."

Asked about reports that PCGG Commissioner Ricardo Abcede was dancing with former first lady Imelda Marcos during the former's birthday party recently, Ramos said it was improper.

Why Enron founding chair, ex-CEO convicted

From page A1

As the verdicts were read, Lay slumped, sighed heavily and shook his head, his sobbing wife Linda tightly clutching his arm.

Skilling looked shaken. US District Judge Sim Lake set sentencing for Sept. 11.

In the courtroom, Lay and his weeping family members gathered in a circle, clasped hands and prayed.

"God's got another plan right now," Lay, the son of a preacher, said without tears. "We'll all come through this stronger and more reliant on God."

Outside the courthouse, he said the verdict had "shocked" him.

"I firmly believe I am innocent of the charges against me," Lay said. "If I were a CEO today, I would say it sends a very dangerous message. (It) basically makes an innocent act criminal."

Lay, 64, Enron founder and former chairman, was convicted of all six counts of conspiracy and fraud and faces a maximum of 45 years in prison.

185 years

Skilling, 52, former chief executive officer, was found guilty of 19 counts of conspiracy, fraud, insider trading and making false statements which, combined, carry a maximum sentence of 185 years.

In a separate trial for Lay, Judge Lake found him guilty of all four bank fraud charges for illegally using money from \$75 million in personal loans to buy stock.

Each of those four charges carries a maximum of 30 years, but experts say he is un-

likely to be sentenced to more than six months for each because he paid off the loans and the lenders suffered no damage.

Lay and Skilling, who once moved comfortably in the highest circles of society and politics, will remain free on a \$5-million bond until they are sentenced.

7th largest company

Enron, which at its height was the nation's seventh-largest company, collapsed in December 2001 into the biggest US bankruptcy at the time amid disclosures it used off-the-books deals to hide billions of dollars in debt and inflate profits.

It also was revealed that chief financial officer Andy Pastow had looted the company of \$60 million while running the side deals.

Prosecutors charged that Lay and Skilling knew Enron's reports of booming profits were just financial trickery, but told the world all was well to keep the stock price up even as the Houston-based power trader slid toward its demise.

Deputy US Attorney General Paul McNulty hailed the convictions.

Message of verdict

"The message of today's verdict is simple: Our criminal laws will be enforced just as vigorously against corporate executives as ... with street criminals," he said.

White House spokesperson Tony Snow said the administration "has been pretty clear there's no tolerance for corporate corruption."

Attorneys for Lay and Skilling vowed to fight the convictions.

Skilling was almost philosophical.

"I think we fought a good fight but some things work and some things don't," he told reporters. "Obviously I am disappointed but that is the way the system works."

Lay attorney Mike Ramsey also promised an appeal.

"The biggest issue is the venue issue," he said, meaning the trial should not have been held in Houston, where Enron was based.

Former Enron employee Chris Jones, 35, stood outside the courthouse as his former bosses left the building.

"If it (the guilty verdict) hadn't happened it would have been an open wound," he said. "This brings closure for some people."

In testimony, Lay and Skilling said they painted a rosy picture of the company because they believed it was in great shape, not because they wanted to cover up problems.

Key testimony

Skilling resigned suddenly in August 2001 after just six months as CEO and was replaced by Lay. The two men testified that Skilling left because he was burned out.

They blamed media coverage and Pastow's thievery for a financial crisis that sank the firm they built from a quiet pipeline business into an international trading powerhouse.

Jurors, who were in their sixth day of deliberations, said some of the most important testimony came from former Enron treasurer Ben Glisan, who was already serving a five-year prison sentence.

Glisan testified Skilling and Lay knew Enron was in deep financial trouble and tried to hide it.

Pastow tearfully told the jury of his misdeeds and said Skilling and Lay were deeply involved in a massive cover-up. He has pleaded guilty to conspiracy in exchange for a 10-year jail sentence.

Prosecutors said Lay and Skilling milked Enron for hundreds of millions of dollars and lived lives of luxury while driving the company into bankruptcy.

Lay took home \$220 million in compensation from the sale of Enron shares from 1999 through 2001, while Skilling got \$150 million, Assistant US Attorney John Hueston said.

Lay used his and the company's money to gain political power by donating heavily to candidates, particularly Republicans and especially the Bush family. He was the biggest donor to President George W. Bush, who before the Enron scandal referred to him warmly as "Kenny Boy."

No fraud, at all

While Lay and Skilling left Enron with their fortunes intact, hundreds of employees saw their retirement savings wiped out as Enron stock lost all value.

Lay and Skilling entered the trial with a claim that shocked many: Not only were they innocent of wrongdoing, no fraud at all occurred at Enron.

On the witness stand, Lay bickered and bristled, even with his own lawyer. Lay arrogantly defended his extravagant lifestyle, including a \$200,000 yacht for wife Linda's birthday party.

"It was difficult to turn off that lifestyle like a spigot," Lay said. AP Reuters

RP cop hurt in E. Timor; 200 Pinoys alerted

From page A1

when renegade Timorese soldiers opened fire on unarmed police in the Timorese capital of Dili, the Department of Foreign Affairs said.

Layon, one of five Philippine National Police officers serving as advisers with the United Nations Office in Timor, is "stable and out of danger," the DFA said.

He was airlifted to Darwin, Australia, for medical treatment along with another wounded UN officer.

Layon's wife, Rochelle, has been informed of the incident, the DFA said.

Civil war

Besides the five PNP men, a Filipino military officer is also working at the UN office in Dili, it said.

East Timor lies about 320 km north-northwest of Australia at the eastern end of the Indonesian archipelago. It is approximately 1,500 km south of Mindanao.

Foreign troops struggled Friday to stave off civil war in the desperately poor country which won independence from Indonesia in 1999.

Nine Timorese police were killed in Thursday's violence during which Layon was wounded. In a separate incident, a mob torched a house on the outskirts of the capital Dili after spraying it with gasoline, killing all six people inside.

C-130 on standby

Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo has asked Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz Jr. to have an Air Force C-130 placed on standby "to evacuate around 200 Filipinos from Dili, if the need arises," a DFA statement said.

Romulo also instructed Ambassador Roy

Cimatu to proceed to Dili to assess the security situation there "as well as to review the evacuation plans formulated by our embassy for its staff and the (other) Filipinos."

Filipinos in East Timor work as lawyers, educators, trainers, engineers, accountants, construction workers, religious missionaries and domestic helpers, the DFA said.

The Philippine Embassy there is composed of seven personnel, including four Filipinos and three locally hired staff.

Conflicting reports

Reports on Thursday's incident were conflicting.

Philippine Ambassador Farita Aguilich-Ong said Layon was hit in the stomach "after renegade soldiers opened fire on unarmed members of the East Timor National Police as they were being evacuated by the UN police and military advisers from the police headquarters in Dili at around 1:30 p.m."

Twenty-seven other people were wounded in the incident.

East Timor Senior Minister and Foreign Minister Jose Ramos Horta, briefing the diplomatic corps, "expressed serious concern over the prospects for peace and reconciliation," the DFA said.

Foreign news agencies gave a different account of Thursday's shooting.

Machete-wielding youths

The Associated Press said it was members of the tiny country's 800-strong army who opened fire on the police, suspecting them of allying themselves with about 600 dismissed soldiers who have engaged in days of deadly street battles with the army in Dili.

The hour-long attack ended only after UN police and military advisers negotiat-

ed a ceasefire with the Timorese soldiers.

The sound of heavy machinegun fire, mortar and small arms was heard from nearby hills and machete-wielding youths were seen stopping a bus on Dili's outskirts, though they allowed it to pass unharmed.

The violence followed the government's decision in March to fire 600 soldiers—40 percent of the military—after they staged a month-long strike to protest poor pay and conditions, moves that highlighted simmering tensions in a nation divided along east-west lines.

The violence that began late April has claimed 25 lives, 20 of them in the past four days.

Guerrilla warfare

After engaging in deadly riots last month, rebel troops fled the capital, setting up positions in the surrounding hills and threatening guerrilla warfare if they were not reinstated.

Some police officers have also begun to ally themselves with the disgruntled soldiers, Jean-Marie Guehenno, the chief of the UN peacekeeping department, said in New York.

He said Thursday's shooting at the national police headquarters apparently was triggered when the officers were escorted from the building, saw the soldiers and "became nervous and started to hurry."

"What I understand, in the very tense situation that existed there, there was some movement and then soldiers apparently opened fire and that's when the police officers were killed," said Guehenno.

Peacekeepers arrive

Australia, which led a multinational peacekeeping force in East Timor in 1999 that ended a bloody rampage by Indone-

sian troops and their militia proxies, said it would send the nation up to 1,300 troops, along with ships, helicopters and armored personnel carriers.

Hundreds of heavily armed Australian forces arrived Thursday and Friday, with the remainder expected to reach East Timor as early as Saturday.

New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark said her nation would send up 120 troops. Portugal, which colonized East Timor for four centuries until 1975, also got the go-ahead to send 120 troops, while Malaysia pledged 500.

Broken skeletons

The six people inside the torched house on the outskirts of Dili—five women and a child—were little more than burned and broken skeletons.

The attackers—four men, dressed in black and wearing balaclavas, neighbors said—came in the middle of the night, broke the windows of the concrete dwelling, doused it in petrol and set it ablaze.

"This is a revenge attack," said Jose Moucho, standing outside the remains of the house. "It's just like 1999."

'Worst day'

That year is etched into the memory of the East Timorese, a time when the vote for independence from Indonesia descended into brutal violence that left nearly 200,000 people dead or displaced.

US Ambassador Joseph Rees came to see the carnage for himself. "We saw the worst day in the history of this country since independence, and we're all hopeful things will get a lot better very dramatically," he said. With reports from AP, AFP



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Cop in Palawan broadcaster's slay sacked from service

By Marlon Ramos
and Jofelle P. Tesorio
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

CAMP VICENTE LIM—THE Policeman suspected to be behind the murder of Puerto Princesa City broadcaster Fernando "Dong" Batul was discharged from the police service yesterday.

Chief Supt. Delfin Genio, Mimaropa police chief, said he ordered the dismissal of PO1 Aaron Golifardo after he was implicated in the killing of a certain Maximo Palces and the wounding of the victim's companion in Puerto Princesa last March 1, 2002.

Genio clarified that his dismissal of the erring policeman had nothing to do with the Batul case.

"The dismissal case against him has been pending for some time now. It just happened that he was named in this new case," Genio told the INQUIRER.

The regional internal affairs service (RIAS) of the Mimaropa police had found Golifardo guilty of grave misconduct charges filed against him for the killing of Palces.

But instead of discharging him, the RIAS meted a "force resignation" penalty against the policeman.

Golifardo, 38, assigned at the 412nd police provincial mobile

group in Palawan, was identified by four witnesses as one of the two armed men who gunned down Batul while he was on his way to work on Monday.

Police have already filed murder charges against Golifardo, who is now detained at the Palawan provincial jail, and another suspect, still at large, in the Batul slay.

The case was raffled to Judge Chito Merigillano of Branch 51.

Police chief Arturo Lomibao has instructed investigators to ensure that "an air-tight case is established" against Golifardo.

Chief Supt. Raul Genio personally arrested Golifardo in Camp Crame on Wednesday afternoon. He was at the camp to attend to an administrative charge filed by his wife and children who accused him of failing to support them financially.

A check showed that Golifardo was listed in the passenger manifest of Air Philippines flight 2P-214 that left Puerto Princesa City at 11:22 a.m. of May 22, some five hours after Batul was shot dead by two motorcycle-riding men.

His plane arrived in Manila at 12:32 p.m.

According to PNP records, Golifardo joined the police service on Sept. 19, 1998 and had been assigned in Palawan ever since.

With Luige A. del Puerto

GMA urges int'l finance execs to invest in RP

DESCRIBING HERSELF AS A "PROUD, ARDENT saleswoman" for the country, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday told an international audience of financial market practitioners that she was bullish on the nation's prospects and urged them to bring their investments here.

But she said she was also a realist and knew there was much to be done given the problems plaguing the nation, including poverty and corruption.

"I come before you here today full of hope, tempered by realism, that we are a nation worth the attention and the investments of the financial markets," Ms Arroyo told some 500 financial practitioners gathered at the Philippine International Convention Center for the 45th Asociacion Cambista Internacional (ACI) Financial Markets Association World Congress Philippines.

Launching into her sales pitch, the President said her government had created over five million jobs in the past five years and that inflation was easing up. Exports grew 26 per-

cent last March and the budget surplus in April was the highest in nine years, she said.

She also noted that the country was enjoying a tourism boom and that prime sites like Clark and Subic were being developed. For the first time, she said, the government was collecting revenues needed for investments in infrastructure, healthcare, education and job creation.

"My government has exerted vigorous efforts to balance the budget, keep the overall security situation safe from terrorists, push growth and pursue political renewal," Ms Arroyo said.

The President said she had invested a lot of her time and effort in getting the nation engaged in global affairs to help modernize it.

Christine Avendaño

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2,000 job-seekers duped of P35M

By Jerome Aning

ALMOST 2,000 FILIPINOS DREAMING OF lucrative employment abroad were duped into forking out close to P35 million for non-existent jobs in the first four months of the year, the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration said yesterday.

POEA Administrator Rosalinda Dimapilis-Baldoz said she was unhappy that the office had not been able to fully press charges against more suspected illegal recruiters because many complainants agreed to withdraw civil action after their money was returned.

She advised workers seeking jobs overseas to double-check with the agency to make sure recruiters had valid licenses and to be informed about the modus operandi of illegal recruiters.

From January to April 2006, Baldoz said, suspected illegal recruiters managed to wangle P34,787,704 from 1,715 victims, most of them coming from the cities of Manila, Quezon and Makati and the provinces of Cavite, Bulacan and Pangasinan.

She also revealed that a number of licensed recruitment agencies were facing administrative complaints for offering jobs in the United Kingdom, South Korea, Sweden and United Arab Emirates that were found to be non-existent.

The non-existent job orders were for factory workers, caregivers, farm workers, domestic helpers and seafarers.

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Saturday, May 27, 2006
6th Week of Easter
Augustine of Canterbury

1st Reading: Acts 18:23-28
Gospel: John 16:23-28

Jesus said to his disciples, "When that day comes you will not ask me anything. Truly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in my Name, he will give you. So far you have not asked in my Name; ask and receive that your joy may be full.

I taught you all this in veiled language, but the time is coming when I shall no longer speak in veiled language, but will tell you plainly of the Father.

When that day comes, you will ask in my Name and it will not be for me to ask the Father for you, for the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and you believe that I came from the Father. As I came from the Father and have come into the world, so I am leaving the world and going to the Father."

Commentary
Now Priscilla and Aquila take Apollo home and teach him about Jesus since he has only heard about John the Baptist. They explain the new way in great detail and Apollo begins to travel and preach, encouraging others with the Scriptures.

We are told that the Father loves us and we may ask anything of the Father because we love Jesus, and Jesus is one in the Father. But what do we ask for in our prayers? Are we asking for missionaries, for martyrs, for steadfastness in persecution, for those who will encourage the Church with the Scriptures, for believers to know joy as they struggle to be good news?

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Pope names new bishop for Manila

POPE BENEDICT XVI HAS APPOINTED another bishop to assist Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales in running the country's premier diocese.

Fr. Broderick Pabillo was named auxiliary bishop of Manila, joining another auxiliary prelate, Bishop Bernardino Cortez.

At 51, Pabillo will be among the country's youngest bishops.

The Vatican announced Pabillo's appointment at noon Wednesday and was subsequently relayed to the Philippine Church and media later in the evening by the new apostolic nuncio, Archbishop Fernando Filoni.

Pabillo was in the mountains of Palawan where he's been on a mission since 1999 when the news came out, according to Peachy Yamsuan, communications director of the archdiocese.

Christian V. Esguerra

Mining probe body's recommendations backed

A PROTESTANT BLOC HAS ENDORSED the Bastes Commission's recommendation to stop mining on Rapu-Rapu Island and for a review of the Mining Act.

"We urge all Filipinos to support and uphold the recommendations of the Bastes Commission. We reiterate our call to our lawmakers to repeal this very destructive law to protect God's creation," the National Council of Churches in the Philippines said in a statement.

Sharon Duremdes, the NCCP secretary general, said the report of the fact-finding body headed by Sorsogon Bishop Arturo Bastes "validated the negative effects of large-scale mining to the people and to the environment."

The NCCP represents 13 million members of mainly Protestant churches.

The Bastes Commission was created by Malacañang to investigate allegations that the operations of the Australian-based Lafayette Mining on Rapu-Rapu had contaminat-

ed the waters off Sorsogon.

Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes said he would base his decision on the fate of the mining company on the report of the commission as well as the results of a dialogue between Lafayette and Rapu-Rapu residents.

The municipal council of Rapu-Rapu favors letting Lafayette continue its operations provided it complies with environmental and public health laws.

A member of the commission yesterday said environmental concerns should be given more weight in deciding whether or not Lafayette should be allowed to stay.

"In all issues, I would say that the environment, effects on which are long-term, should be given very high priority in decision-making,"

geochemist Aloysius Baes told a forum at the Ambassador Hotel yesterday.

Baes said that while he recognized that mining may be the answer to the country's economic woes, it does not seem to be the case in Lafayette's Rapu-Rapu operations.

According to Baes, the government only earned about P2 mil-

lion from Lafayette's operations last year, representing the excise tax paid by the company.

He noted that countries like Guyana and Australia get over 50 percent in pre-tax shares from mining operations while the Philippines only gets a 2 percent excise tax.

The commission's vice chair Charles Avila said the people should be more sensitive to the plight of the

larger public and not just focus on those who benefit from mining.

"Sometimes we celebrate the giving of jobs to 300 to 500 people, but we are not sensitive to the 4,000 to 5,000 others who have a hard time because the waters do not give as before, the earth does not give as before," he said. *Christian V. Esguerra and Lella B. Salaverria with a report from Cynthia D. Balana*

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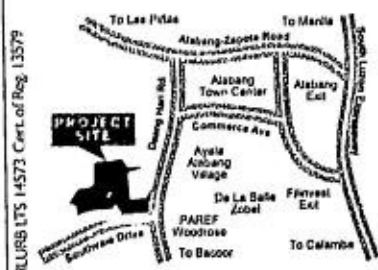
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2. transact any other business which may be brought before the meeting.

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Toadyism

IN SUBSTANCE AND FORM, THE PRESIDENTIAL Commission on Good Government's tack to settle with the Marcoses in connection with their ill-gotten wealth cases is in poor taste. There's much to worry about the moral implications of settling with the Marcoses; the issue itself is a moral millstone around the neck of the Filipino people, and most especially of the PCGG which is tasked to pursue plunder issues against the Marcoses and their cronies.

EDITORIAL

But even increasingly worrisome is the poor form in which the PCGG is pushing the envelope. It does not seem to mind the sensitivities being violated in its apparent act to consort with the enemy.

The insensitivity is reflected in PCGG Commissioner Ricardo Abcede's invitation for Imelda Marcos to attend his birthday party recently. Now, it may be Abcede's private business whom to invite over to his parties, but considering that he is a public official assigned to prosecute the Marcoses, who face 500 ill-gotten wealth cases, it is the public's business to remind him his private business may be the public's privation. The invitation smacks of sleeping with the enemy.

But, alas, Abcede does not seem to know his enemies. "I just wanted to have fun with friends," he said, in defense of his birthday party. So does he consider Imelda Marcos a personal friend? How does that relate with his "public" task of prosecuting the ill-gotten wealth cases against her? Whose side is he on, anyway?

Abcede said that since he is pursuing an amicable settlement with the Marcoses, "I have to be amicable with them." This seems to betray a certain defeatism, if not toadyism.

Even more egregious is Abcede's explanation why he is being amicable to Imelda Marcos: "I am negotiating from a position of strength, but I would also like them to be in the proper frame of mind so they will be open to a compromise."

The remarks indicate otherwise: the PCGG is not negotiating from a position of strength, but of extreme weakness. How else could one explain Abcede's attempt to be extra-amicable with Imelda Marcos? How else could one explain his attempts to soothe and relax the Marcoses so that they would be "in the proper frame of mind" and "be open to a compromise"?

The last phrase, in fact, signals who has the upper hand in the issue: It reveals that the PCGG is pursuing a policy of rapprochement and even of appeasement with the Marcoses in order to soften their stance and "be open to a compromise." The Marcoses are in a position of strength, while the PCGG is in a position of... slavishness?

Abcede, otherwise a lawyer who has had a credible private practice and someone who really knows his law and legal tactics, should realize that by pushing for a settlement, the government is doing the Marcoses a service. It has practically reversed the process of legal settlements. Instead of the Marcoses, it's the government suing for peace. It's the prosecutor suing for a way out. It's the hunter being hunted. We see the PCGG attack dog with its tail wagging between its legs!

We would have been spared the unseemly sight of a government doing the bidding of the Marcoses if the PCGG has bothered as much with the content as with the form. Abcede and PCGG Chair Camilo Sabio have been dangling the prospect of an amicable settlement with the Marcoses. Abcede may have denied he has been "trumpeting" it all along, but at the least, he seems to have offered the prospect as a trial balloon to test the public's receptivity to the idea. Either way, he has gotten the public's reaction, and in the process, weakened the government's position. He is handing the Marcoses a legal and a moral victory on a silver platter.

Inevitably, the bad form owes to a corrupt soul, an immoral core. If the government had pursued the moral case against the Marcoses, then it would strengthen the legal claim against them. Morality underpins all the legal claims against the Marcos dictatorship, and Abcede and the PCGG should not forget that. If the people don't stick to the moral, then they risk becoming moral lemons. Or at the least, they risk becoming toadies to the Marcoses.

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An imperfect Constitution

LET'S MAKE IT CLEAR AT THE OUTSET. Those against the Cha-cha are not necessarily against re-examining and changing the Constitution. It's the procedure being employed by the dancers that we object to. That will be my subject for this column tomorrow.

The Constitution of 1987 was framed by an appointive Constitutional Commission and not by a constitutional convention of elected delegates. While the commissioners were generally competent—a number of them exceptionally so—they were still not truly representative of the electorate and its special interests.

One might say that their common qualification, irrespective of their expertise (or none of it) in the art of constitution-making, was the confidence in each of them of President Corazon Aquino. They did not even have to be confirmed by a then non-existent Commission on Appointments. An examination of their roster will reveal some obscure members who, ironically, did not become prominent in their secluded enclaves.

The commissioners came from various sectors with diverse persuasions, which could be one reason why they were unable to meet their deadline. They approved their handiwork one month later and recommended to the President that it be submitted to the people not within 60 days as originally scheduled but after three months.

The campaign for the ratification of the draft Constitution was led by President Aquino herself. Opposition to the document, while spirited, was largely disorganized and consequently ineffective. Many people, while doubtful about some of its provisions and especially its length, nevertheless voted for the proposed Constitution because they felt it would provide the stability the country sorely needed at that time.

Ratification was approved by 76.29 percent of the electorate with only 22.74 percent

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz



against. The Constitution became effective on Feb. 2, 1987.

The most notable flaw of the Constitution of 1987 is its verbosity and consequent prolixity that have dampened popular interest in what should be the common concern of the nation. It would seem that every one of the members of the Commission wanted to put in it his two centavos worth, and unfortunately succeeded, thereby expanding the charter to unseemly dimensions.

Thus, in some of its provisions, the Constitution sounds more like a political speech than a formal document stating only basic legal precepts. It is full of platitudes. This is true of the policies on social justice and the national economy which should have been worded with less loquacity to give the legislature more leeway in their implementation.

Such policies could have been expressed briefly without loss of substance if the framers had performed their solemn task with less personal vainglory, let alone distrust of the legislature. What is worse is the inclusion of certain subjects that have no place in an austere Constitution, like sports, love, drugs and even advertising.

Especially pretentious is the tortuous language of some of its commands like the following masterpiece of circumlocution in Art. XVI, Sec. 10:

"The State shall provide the policy environment for the full development of Filipino capability and the emergence of communication structures suitable to the needs and aspiration

of the nation and the balanced flow of information into, out of, and across the country, in accordance with a policy that respects the freedom of speech and of the press."

Excuse me?

This drivel in the supreme law of the Philippines belongs to a manual on how to write gibberish. The author of that atrocity must have thought he was writing for a spellbound posterity when what he was doing was contaminating the precious document with the virus of his pomposity. Verbosity is bad enough, ambiguity is even worse, but pollution of the Constitution with such rubbish is beyond penance or forgiveness.

In addition to the above defects, the Constitution of 1987 suffers from more substantive shortcomings that demand rectification. Among these are the inclusion of party-list members in the House of Representatives, the submissiveness of the Judicial and Bar Council to the President, the lack of educational qualifications for elective officials, the permissive militarization of the civilian government, the useless and mocked imposition of elective term limits, the power of Congress to extend martial law beyond the 60-day presidential period, the expensive senatorial elections nationwide instead of by districts, among many other faults.

Justice Jose P. Laurel, one of the distinguished framers of the Commonwealth Constitution, famously said that it was "lacking in perfection and perfectibility." The same well-meant criticism must apply as well to the also imperfect Constitution of 1987. The problems it aspired to correct are still with us if they have not in fact even exacerbated. It is clear that part of the blame is traceable to the supreme law of the land the nation is now re-examining.

Many people, including me, are anxious to correct and improve the Constitution but not through the lawless method of the Cha-cha. It will aggravate the malady rather than heal it.

Presidential vs parliamentary system

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod



search is limited to two constitutional features: electoral rules (i.e., district magnitudes, electoral formulas—majoritarian vs. proportional, and ballot structure), and form of government (parliamentary, presidential). Of necessity, the electoral rules will be less emphasized in this column. What are the findings?

1. With respect to political accountability (this refers to voters' control over politicians who abuse their power as well as the voters' ability to select the most "able" candidates), which affects the extent of corruption, it is pointed out that the greater the political accountability, the less the corruption or the greater the incentive for good behavior among politicians.

The theoretical priors are that accountability is likely to be stronger in a presidential than in a parliamentary form of government for two reasons:

(a) the chain of delegation is simpler and more direct in the former ("the scope for collusion is greater under parliamentary"), and (b) many presidential regimes have strong separation of powers, not only between the executive and the legislative, but also within the legislative.

What do the data show (83 democracies in the 1990s)? The data are consistent with the theory only to a degree, depending on the quality of democracy (as measured by constraints on the executive, political participation and other institutional data produced by Freedom House and the Polity IV project, all accessible in the Internet). Among "good" democracies, presidential regimes have less widespread corruption than parliamentary

systems, but the result does not hold among "bad" democracies. (Caution: The result for the "good" democracies is not very robust, because of too few observations. In the sample used, there were many more "bad" democracies, which lead the authors to say: "When it comes to the form of government, our knowledge is not yet precise enough to give a solid answer.")

The reader may conclude that the Philippines must be a "bad" democracy. What's the latest from Freedom House and Polity IV on that?

Freedom House measures freedom according to two broad categories: political rights (PR) and civil liberties (CL), and rates countries annually on a scale of 1 (freest) to 7 (not free) in both of them. If the average of the two is between 1 and 2.5, the country is considered free; from 3 to 5.5, it is considered partly free; and from 5.5 to 7 it is not free.

What is the rating of the Philippines? The 2006 Freedom in the World report (which covers the conditions in 2005) gives us a rating of 3, which means the country is "partly free." Previously (in the 2005, 2004, 2003 and 2002 reports—I could not access older reports), we were considered "free," with a rating of 2.5, but the authors dropped our PR rating from 2 to 3 in the latest survey.

The Polity IV contains coded annual information on regime and authority characteristics for all independent states (with greater than 500,000 population) in the global state system for the years 1800-2003. On a scale of 0 (low) to 10 (high) for democracy (general openness of political institutions), the Philippines' score is 8; on a scale of 0 (low) to 10 (high) for autocracy (general closedness of political institutions), our score is 0; on a scale of -10 (high autocracy) to +10 (high democracy), our score is +8.

All of which means that we can consider ourselves among the "good" democracies. (Next week: form of government, policy and economic performance)

Erap complicates things for himself and cronies

FORMER PRESIDENT ESTRADA RECENTLY TESTIFIED at the Sandiganbayan that he opened the Jose Velarde account on behalf of two Chinese-descended businessmen-cronies, in order to help facilitate their loan applications. His amazing admission sounds quite naïve, but it's actually complicating for him and for his cronies as it opens them all to charges of graft and corruption. This makes me wonder whether he was properly advised by his highly paid lawyers. But then, when one thinks of it, how can he contravene Clarissa Ocampo's testimony that she was just a foot away when he signed the bank forms as Jose Velarde, except to try to sound quite innocent and naïve?

While the two chambers of Congress are locking horns over the manner of amending the Constitution, there are those who prefer to already examine its economic provisions to see in what areas the entry of foreign capital could be encouraged. This issue could actually be more *madugo* in the long run than the manner of amending the Charter, which is only being held hostage to the ambitions of some senators.

Charter Change Advocacy Commission member Romela Bengzon says that even if more than P100 billion could be collected from the amended VAT law and the "sin taxes," there still won't be enough to fund the country's economic development needs. She cites NEDA data showing that from 2006 to 2010, P1.5 trillion would be needed for infrastructure projects alone, a figure bigger than the entire national budget for this year. Bengzon and many other Cha-cha advocates maintain that we should allow the entry of foreign capital in those areas of the economy that have remained closed to them, as only in this way can more jobs be created for our legions of unemployed and underemployed. Where do we get that kind of money here? she asks.

I agree. Lifting the restrictions on various aspects of our economy would help alleviate the perennial scarcity of jobs in the cities as well as in the countryside. There is fear about tackling this

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan



subject, however, because to some, it could mean open season for the plunder of precious national resources. But it is up to us Filipinos to put the necessary and reasonable restrictions. Let's consider how our prosperous neighbors in the region have sought to balance the need to attract foreign investors in a highly competitive world and protect their resources. Their experience is there for us to explore. We don't have to reinvent the wheel.

Last month, my husband and I and my sister's family had occasion to visit some friends in Davao City. We hadn't been there since 1997 and we noted its enormous progress, especially in terms of infrastructure. Davao is considered one of the most livable cities in the country and even in the world, and it's easy to see why. It is a clean, green place with all the amenities of a big city such as big beautiful malls, restaurant-bar clusters and a thriving nightlife (most of the big shows in Manila go down there). But it has little of the traffic, pollution and criminality of Metro Manila.

Two of the most popular places in Davao are Jack's Ridge, a cluster of restaurants on one of the city's many hills, that provides a spectacular view of the city, and the Eden Resort of Chito Ayala, which is a great place for nature-trippers. We also visited the breeding ground of the Philippine eagle and I was happy to see that the Eagle Foundation has run it very professionally. Many corporations and private individuals have sponsored the care of particular birds or contribute to the park's upkeep.

One reason for Davao City's enormous progress

is its link-up with various countries abroad, through its beautiful international airport. When we were there, dignitaries from Palau, a group of islands in the Western Pacific about an hour and a half from Davao by air, were visiting. I note that Palau folks now fly to Davao on regular direct flights of Asian Spirit for educational, medical, shopping and tourism reasons. It's the fruit of 10 years of a working relationship between them. In turn, several thousand Filipino workers are gainfully employed in Palau, mainly in the big construction projects that have mushroomed since its independence from the United States in 1990.

One positive development in our society is that many well-to-do folks are now taking their obligation toward their less fortunate brethren more seriously. Take the case of Mian Wright Añover, who hails from Bacolod and lives in a plush subdivision in Alabang. Last year around this time, I wrote about her efforts to put up a day-care center, which she named after the founder of Opus Dei, St. Josemaria Escriva, in Barangay Langgam, a depressed area in San Pedro Tunasan, Laguna, five years ago. Due to the plea of the kids' parents, Mian eventually transformed the day-care center into a pre-school. Today, it has 60 pupils from ages 3 to 6 in three sessions. She also put up a livelihood training project for the kids' mothers, beginning with a high-speed sewing center.

Mian's in need of help to cover the P350 tuition and PE uniforms costing P250 for each child, or a total of P600 per child per year (cost of books will be subsidized by the local government starting this year). Last year, many kind-hearted readers responded to her plea for financial assistance for her kids, and this year she's again asking for help. Other kind souls may wish to concentrate on helping the kids' elder siblings who are in nearby elementary and high schools by sponsoring the cost of the latter's school ID and basic supplies amounting to P200 per student. Classes start June 5 for elementary and high school students, and June 13 for the Day Care Center. Call Mian Añover at Tel. Nos. 809-3823 and 0917-560-7800.

'X-Men III': The power of choice

YOU HAVE STRUGGLED ALL YOUR LIFE WITH something that sets you apart, a characteristic that makes you "other" in a world where everybody else seems to belong.

Whatever it is—skin color, gender, sexual preference, disease, disability, circumstance of birth—if a "cure" for it was to emerge, would you jump at the chance? Would you go for the cure that would make you one of "them"? Or would you denounce the cure, refusing to give up the one thing that makes you unique and special? Conformity or individuality? Belonging or standing apart? These are the choices that confront the mutants in "X-Men: The Last Stand," presumably the last in a film trilogy based on one of the most popular and most beloved comics franchises.

The story arc begins with a genetic mutation that gives certain humans superhuman abilities, abilities that hold the potential for either much good or much evil. The X-Men franchise tracks two opposing threads for the mutant community, each one headed by a charismatic, powerful figure. One story thread leads to Xavier's School for the Gifted, an academy established by Professor Charles Xavier (Patrick Stewart) to train mutant youngsters in harnessing their gifts to do good, disciplining their powers and learning how to live in a human milieu. The other thread is held by Magneto (Ian McKellen), who has long resented humans' fear and loathing for mutants, believing that mutants should use their powers to assert themselves and indeed even dominate humanity.

THE TWO opposing sides of the mutant community unite when Worthington Labs develops the "cure," taken from the DNA of a boy named Leech who can drain a mutant's powers with a mere touch.

What motivates Warren Worthington II, head of Worthington Labs, to invest billions into developing the cure? Alas, his reasons are far from altruistic; as it turns out, he is motivated mainly by his desire to turn his son Angel (Ben Foster) into a "normal" young man, to make him shed his wings that give him the power to fly.

Professor Xavier and the other X-Men (X-People)

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David



ple?) are concerned about what the availability of the cure means to their community, and are incensed when they find out that darts loaded with the "cure formula" have been developed as a weapon against lawless mutants. Magneto, on the other hand, immediately concludes that the "cure" was developed to wipe them out, and immediately uses it as a rallying cry to unite the scattered mutant forces and destroy the labs—located in the once-impregnable Alcatraz—developing the cure and housing its source.

A side story concerns Jean Gray (Famke Janssen), a powerful telekinetic with telepathic abilities, who is believed to have sacrificed herself to save the other X-Men in "X-Men II." But it turns out that she has been resurrected as "Dark Phoenix," her alter ego, which Professor Xavier had buried in her subconscious mind because Phoenix represented the wild, uncontrollable and powerful aspect of her powers (just how powerful the world will soon discover to its dismay).

How the other X-Men—from old favorites like "Wolverine" (Hugh Jackman), "Storm" (Halle Berry), "Rogue" (Anna Paquin), "Cyclops" (James Marsden), to new characters like "Beast" (Kelsey Grammer, in a bit of surprise but successful casting) and "Kitty Pryde" (Ellen Page)—deal with the dilemma presented by the cure, as well as with their conflicting emotions regarding the "new" Jean Gray, especially Wolverine who has been in love with her for a long time, makes for an emotionally resonant film.

"THE CURE is the real villain of the story," Berry

tells an interviewer. "It's an issue I've struggled with my entire life. When I was a child, I felt that if only I could change myself, my life would be better. As I've gotten older, I've come to terms with what utter nonsense that is, and this movie adds light to that dark subject."

It's a view McKellen shares. "It's abhorrent to me," he says. "As it would be if a person said I need curing of my sexuality (he has been quite open about his homosexuality), or if someone said that black people could take a pill that would 'cure' them of being black."

Jackman, though, suggests the issue is more complex than it appears. "There's another side of it to explore. Look at Rogue... her abilities (to absorb the powers of other mutants which could result in death) are amazing, yet she lives a very lonely life. She can never touch anyone, have a physical relationship, or have children. As politically abhorrent as the cure is, it's also understandable that someone like her would consider taking it."

In a world where genetic modification and stem-cell research makes the "cure" no longer as absurd or fantastic as it might have been, "X-Men: The Last Stand" crosses the line from comic-book fantasy to social (and scientific and political) reality.

AND so we go back to the original question. If a cure for your condition exists, would you take it? If you wanted to alter something you were born with—your height, your bust size, your teeth, your skin color—would you? For many people the answer is an unqualified yes, and they have taken the cure, or the many versions of it, from vitamins to orthodontics to cosmetic surgery.

But what if your condition was far more fundamental to who you are? What if it was your sexuality? Would you go for the "cure" offered by any number of religious groups who believe sexual preference can be altered by counseling and prayer? Or would you assert that being gay or lesbian or bisexual was part of the warp and woof of your personality?

Whether mutant or human, making a decision has never been easy or clear-cut. What is most important, though, is knowing you have choices and enjoy the freedom to choose.

Should the troops come home now?

LAST WEEKEND'S ANNOUNCEMENT THAT Iraqi lawmakers have finally formed a unity government is welcome news, both for Iraq and for US President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair. The American and British governments, increasingly unpopular at home, desperately needed some tangible evidence of progress to assuage their domestic critics and to begin to speak openly of an exit strategy.

But Iraq's greatest challenges lie ahead. If Bush and Blair declare victory before the real battles have begun, they will undermine the very process to which both have committed so much at such great cost.

Bush waited weeks for a positive development that would allow him to suggest he can reduce troop levels in Iraq from 133,000 to 100,000 by the end of 2006. Blair, still stung by his Labour Party's defeat in local elections in early May, also welcomed the good news from Iraq. During a triumphal surprise visit to Baghdad on May 22, he said he expected Iraqi forces to take responsibility for "territorial security" in much of the country by the end of the year. "It is the violence that keeps us here," he said. "It is the peace that allows us to go."

The optimism is premature. The formation of a unity government is only the first of many hurdles Iraq's new government must clear if it is to build a durable peace. Its first task will be to remove those provisions of Iraq's constitution that pit Iraq's Sunni, Shia and Kurds against one another. Under current Iraqi law, the parliamentary committee charged with making these constitutional changes has four months to complete its task. The four-month clock began ticking on May 3, following the first meeting of Iraq's new parliament.

The changes are badly needed. The committee must enact a new hydrocarbon law that guarantees each of Iraq's factions a fair share of the country's oil wealth, which accounts for 97 percent of total export revenue. Under the current constitution, local governments have the right to

WORLD VIEW

Ian Bremmer



exploit (and profit directly from) oil extracted from new sites beneath their territory, while only a share of the income from existing sites must go to Iraq's central government.

On May 15, two small independent energy companies (Turkey's Genel Enerji and Canada's Addax Petroleum) became the latest foreign firms to begin drilling in Kurdish-controlled territory under an agreement with the regional government. Kurdish politicians within the new parliament have good reason to protect these lucrative deals as debate begins over constitutional changes.

But the central government will need a large share of that income if it is to finance the construction of new institutions of governance, invest in critical infrastructure, undertake onerous reforms aimed at economic liberalization and provide the resource-poor (and already restive) Sunnis of central Iraq with a greater share of the country's wealth.

The constitution must also be amended to reverse the worst effects of a de-Baathification process that aimed to dismantle the vestiges of Saddam Hussein's regime. In practice, de-Baathification has excluded thousands of Iraqis—most of them Sunnis who joined the party during the Saddam era only to secure good jobs—from the country's political and economic life.

Finally, the Iraqi government must begin dismantling the militia groups that still outgun the fledgling Iraqi army, and it must defeat the largely Sunni-led insurgency. Each of these tasks is formidable. If Bush and Blair prematurely with-

draw large numbers of the troops that support Iraqi stability, the country's new government would have little chance of success.

There is some reason for optimism that efforts to stem the tide of violence can succeed. Media reports of Iraqi bloodshed focus overwhelmingly on Baghdad—where the large majority of foreign journalists are based—creating the impression that the desperate security situation there is representative of the country as a whole. But in the Kurdish-controlled areas of the north and Shiite-dominated provinces in the south, levels of crime and deadly violence compare favorably with those in many cities in the United States.

But attacks in Iraq's "Sunni triangle" (and Baghdad, in particular) occur at a rate rivaling those in Chechnya and the Niger Delta. Since Sunni militants destroyed the Shiite Askariya mosque in February, hundreds of Iraqis have been killed in a series of tit-for-tat sectarian attacks. Tens of thousands have fled from mixed Sunni-Shiite cities to safer havens in ethnically homogeneous enclaves that are effectively controlled by Sunni and Shiite militias. Only the presence of foreign troops slows the further balkanization of the country's already fractious politics.

That's why the temptation for Bush and Blair to limit further political damage at home by prematurely declaring victory in Iraq is so dangerous. If they use the good news to begin withdrawing significant numbers of the foreign troops who bolster Iraq's stability at a crucial and vulnerable moment, they will have undermined the project to which both have devoted so much political capital. And they will leave the new Iraqi government at the mercy of forces that would eventually pull the country apart.

Project Syndicate

Ian Bremmer is president of Eurasia Group, the global political risk consultancy. His latest book, "The J Curve: A New Way to Understand Why Nations Rise and Fall," will be published in September.

A vision of Utopia

THERE'S A GROUP OF SOCIAL CRITICS, MANY OF THEM veterans of failed administrations or former youth activists in their own right, who have taken to task the present generation of middle-class youth for their shortcomings. They take our seemingly nonexistent reaction to the political turmoil as a sign of a generational disease variously called ignorance, apathy and indifference.

I am a young man myself, I come from a middle-class family and I'm tired of the criticism being directed at me and my peers.

Don't be misled by our seemingly nonexistent anger in the face of the country's problems. To believe that we are blind to our country's situation is frankly insulting. We know, we're disgusted and we're turned off. And this is the reason for our "nonexistent" reaction.

Are we not a passionately nationalistic generation? they ask. Well, in defense of my peers, many of us were among the middle-class youth who were in Edsa II. Whether we like it or not, this was our generation's People Power. Excuse us for not taking to the streets again this time, especially when we see the ridiculous redundancy of this practice of holding mass actions, which have produced so little change. Pessimistic we may be, but this definitely cannot be described as apathy. In fact, I regard this as a sign of maturity.

We're sick and tired of investing our energies in fighting a system which has never translated criticism into change. Naturally, we drift back to our own interests. If this is a fault, it's a fault we share with others who are no longer young and who do not belong to the middle class. For every underprivileged Filipino who takes to the streets to fight for change, there are many more self-absorbed Filipinos who happen to be unproductive employees, vice-addicted spouses, abusive parents and undisciplined citizens.

At least the "lack of involvement" of the young middle class that I interact with can be rationalized as a proper way to channel our energies. Some of my college friends are prone to saying, "We have no time to rally." But behind such seeming indifference is a genuine concern to strive to meet our obligations. Many of us simply want to fulfill our primary duty as young citizens, which is to be good students. And by doing so, we seek to seize the opportunity most young men and women of our generation do not have.

Taking this course puts us in a better position to help the country in the long run. Business majors go on to create their own enterprises that help our economy while creating more and better job opportunities for our countrymen. Science majors continue to make possible progress in their field that improves the quality of life. Liberal arts majors (myself included) continue to study and promote the humanities, which help enrich our arts and our culture. (Consider the youth's contributions to the resurgence of OPM and Philippine cinema, for example.)

Sure, we keep to our own world and often just pursue our personal inclinations. But by giving the system a cold shoulder, I think we are helping build a self-sustaining citizenry. And that is true People Power.

The outrage toward and protest against an oppressive system by the youth of the 1970s and 1980s are very well known. Their actions and the consequences they had to suffer made them heroes. But if the ways they tried to solve national problems were the most appropriate and the best, why does our own generation have to deal with the same problems of the same formidable magnitude, with only the principal characters changing?

The germ of the conflict is not only alive, it continues to flourish. Even as time changed, one constant has remained to block the process of healing: our reluctance to change our own ways. Our own generation (or at least the young men and women I interact with) sees this, and we've subconsciously decided to attack the problem in another way.

When we point an accusing finger at corrupt government officials, we want to be sure that we ourselves aren't corrupt citizens. We, the middle-class youth, are trying to right the wrongs of a tainted culture by doing our own thing, making sure we can handle that reality before we start blaming other people, like those in government.

Is this extreme? Perhaps. Is a self-interested culture good? Maybe not. But with the proper guidance that our predecessors are supposed to give us (as opposed to criticism), this radical approach might work. Maybe we can become citizens working primarily for the betterment of self and family at no expense to the quality of life of our fellow Filipinos. That's an ideal worth striving for.

This is where many of us "young, apathetic, middle class Filipinos" stand. Times are different, so we're doing things in a different way. We're trying to create an ideal world where government's power over us is minimal. I think many of us, regardless of age and social status, would love to create and live in such a Utopia.

Martin Villanueva, 20, is an incoming junior, BFA Creative Writing, at the Ateneo de Manila University.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

THEY SAID

Drunken God

"He is apparently drunk with power and playing God. He has failed not only to defend the dignity of the victim but also to assert the sovereignty of the country."

—Akabayon party-list Rep. Loretta Ann Rosales on Justice Secretary Raul Gonzales after he downgraded the charges against three of the four US Marines accused of raping a Filipino woman

Fiscal's prerogative

"Even the Supreme Court respects the prerogative of fiscals. We are the first line of defense in the criminal justice system. We can't deviate from how the law defines the accessories or principals in a crime."

—Olongapo City prosecutor Prudencio Jalandoni said when he was threatened with insubordination charges after he disagreed with Justice Secretary Raul Gonzales's decision to downgrade the charges against three of four US Marines accused of rape

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Sorry forever if graft prevails

I AM A MEMBER OF THE WORKING class. I pay the right amount of taxes and I pay them on time primarily because I don't really have a choice—my honest employer deducts taxes from my salary.

But honesty is not always rewarded. In fact, we are punished for being stupid. We know for a fact that corrupt government officials and lawmakers pocket a large chunk of our hard-earned money, and yet we still remit taxes.

And so, we are outraged. We call radio stations to air our grievances. We write letters to the editor to complain. We blog to express our frustration. But have we done enough? Would ranting and raging enable us to recover our money?

How do we get the most out of what the Bureau of Internal Revenue collects from us? Let me count the ways:

1. Walk on paved roads.
2. Use the overpass.
3. Take the sidewalk.
4. Ride the MRT and the LRT.
5. Stop on bridges. While you're there, enjoy the scenery.
6. Try a Ro-Ro adventure.
7. Wait for a ride in a waiting shed.

8. Play basketball in a court donated by your congressman.

9. Visit parks and zoos maintained by the government.

10. Bring your kids to a public playground.

11. Smell the flowers at the plaza.

12. Relieve yourself inside public rest rooms.

13. Enroll your kids in public schools.

14. Avail yourselves of government-sponsored scholarships.

15. Spend time in a public library.

16. Watch the shows on NBN 4.

17. Listen to the programs of Radyo ng Bayan.

18. Attend free concerts, stage plays and other shows produced by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts.

19. Participate in fiestas, foundation day celebrations and other fun-filled activities organized by your city or municipal government.

20. Purchase low-cost medicines from the government-sponsored Botika ng Bayan.

21. Buy inexpensive items from Tindahan ni Gloria Labandera rolling stores.

22. If you're a government employee, do not be absent. Every centavo counts.

23. In case of legal troubles, seek the assistance of the Public Attorney's Office.

24. Confine sick family members at the Philippine General Hospital and other government-run clinics and infirmaries.

25. Inter your dead relatives in public cemeteries.

26. See world-class athletes in action during regional sporting events hosted by the country.

27. Resolve conflicts in courts.

28. Threatened? Seek the help of cops. Call 117.

29. Stuck in traffic? Search for an MMDA enforcer. Dial 136.

30. Vote. And vote wisely.

The next time you see the road sign that says, "Sorry for the inconvenience. Your taxes working for you," just smile. It's the best thing that you can do. Because unless we wage a really serious fight against graft and corruption, we will be sorry forever. And that would be the most inconvenient feeling of all.

—LOI REYES LANDICHO, 9F Jacinta Bldg. II, Guadalupe, Edsa, Makati City

Why hearing of NorthRail case was suspended

IN THE INTEREST OF FAIRNESS, please allow us to correct the false allegations raised by Victor Agustin in his column "Derailed complaint," regarding the case filed by Prof. Harry L. Roque Jr. and other parties against the NorthRail project. (PDI, 5/8/06)

It is not true that Judge Cesar Santamaria, who presides over Branch 145 of the Makati City Regional Trial Court, indefinitely suspended the hearing on the NorthRail case because he was irked that Roque flew to the United States "without a by-your-leave."

If Agustin did his own research, he would have known that during that hearing, the Office of the Solicitor General and the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel, as well as the lawyers for the Chinese interests, filed a barrage of motions, all wanting to immediately dismiss the case. In fact, the judge repeatedly said during the hearing that he did not see why the summary hearing should not proceed, as there was a legal ground for it.

On account of the pending motions, the judge granted all the parties to the case time to answer each other's written pleadings.

Moreover, there is no rule of court that requires a petitioner to seek leave of court before leaving the country. A party has only to be personally present in the proceedings when he is specifically required by the court. Otherwise, he may be represented by counsel.

While it is true that Roque flew to the United States, he did so to represent the country in the prestigious international law Jessup Moot Court competitions, he being the coach of the UP Law Jessup Team, the country's official representative to this year's competitions. It was a matter of national pride that he had to attend the previously scheduled event.

Our contention is that there are no factual issues in the case but merely legal ones. Hence, we do not even need witnesses, only stipulations as to the legal issues in dispute. We only had one witness—one of the petitioners in the case—to testify that we asked for certified true copies of the relevant documents from concerned government agencies, a request that these agencies have denied us.

—ROMEL REGALADO BAGARES, counsel for the plaintiffs, Roque and Butuyan Law Offices, Antel 2000 Corporate Center, Salcedo Village, Makati City

Philippines' dynamic contribution to world's peacekeeping efforts

THIS IS IN REFERENCE TO THE news report titled "AFP admits taking cut from RP peacekeepers' pay." (PDI, 5/11/06)

The Department of Foreign Affairs-Office of United Nations Affairs and Other International Organizations (UNIO) would like to comment on certain points in the story, which mainly focused on the interview with Col. Dante Balao, head of the AFP Peacekeeping Operations Center (APKOC). As reported, Balao did indeed meet with officials of UNIO to discuss the cuts in the allowances allocated for AFP personnel deployed to UN peacekeeping operations (PKOs).

However, UNIO has yet to receive a copy of the report of the AFP deputy chief of staff for operations (J3), which contains the recommendation for the cuts. The APKOC is an operational arm of the AFP. It is the J3, not the APKOC, which determines PKO policy for the AFP.

Also, the DFA is awaiting the Department of National Defense's opinion on the matter.

UNIO, therefore, has yet to obtain a complete picture of the situation from the side of our defense establishment.

The National Defense College of the Philippines (NDCP) recently hosted a seminar-workshop on RP Participation in UN Peace Support Operations. In that workshop, major issues concerning our PKO community and contributions were discussed.

UNIO is organizing a high-level conference on PKOs.

UNIO would like to assure that the Filipino peacekeepers have always been a positive and dynamic contribution to PKOs.

—ALADIN G. VILLACORTE, assistant secretary, Office of the United Nations and Other International Organizations, Department of Foreign Affairs, 2330 Roxas Blvd., Pasay City

Dogs abused to 'train' them for dogfights

WE THANK THE POLICE OFFICERS who rescued 70 dogs from men who clearly meant to engage them in a dogfight and sell their meat. ("70 dogs rescued," PDI, 5/11/06) These men deserve to be charged with cruelty to animals.

Forcing dogs to fight is a cruel activity that is illegal in many countries. Pit bulls are often

starved and beaten to make them "mean" and to train them to attack. When they aren't fighting, they are usually chained and virtually forgotten. They would be lucky to get a scrap of food.

Dogs who manage to survive fights often sustain serious injuries, such as broken bones and crushed cartilage. Many suffer and die from blood loss, shock, dehydration, exhaustion, or infection, hours or days after a fight.

To learn more about the abuse these animals suffer and what you can do to make a difference, visit www.HelpingAnimals.com.

—SONIA G. ASTUDILLO, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (Peta) Asia Pacific, SoniaA@petaniasia.org

—LOI REYES LANDICHO, 9F Jacinta Bldg. II, Guadalupe, Edsa, Makati City

'Jeopardy' reveals mediocrity in action

I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH you an innocuous tidbit about the current state of our nation.

"Jeopardy" is a popular TV quiz show featuring the best and brightest Americans vying to answer difficult questions, for honor and money. Many contestants are Mensa members. It is shown to a global audience. Locally, it is aired Mondays to Fridays at 8:30 p.m. by cable channel ETC.

In its May 10 episode, one of the

six categories of questions asked was about the Philippines. Out of the five questions in that category, four were promptly and correctly answered by all three contestants: MacArthur, Magellan, Spanish empire and the United States.

The last question, "The presidential candidate who defeated film actor Fernando Poe in the 2004 elections" elicited a response from only one contestant who gave a wrong answer: "Cory

Aquino." The two others, including the champion, had no clue.

One can only surmise that Cory's name and stature are really enshrined in world history. More significantly, this tidbit suggests to all and sundry that the Arroyo administration, or its female leader, to be more specific, is mediocrity in motion.

—BOBBY N. LIM, 185 Molave Ave., Molave Park, Merville, Parañaque City

GMA's doubtful call for death penalty abolition

I AGREE WITH THE EDITORIAL titled "Diminishing space." (PDI, 5/2/06) I am a Catholic and a pro-life advocate, and I helped the campaign of the Church against the culture of death. But I doubt Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's sincerity in her call for the abolition of the death penalty.

Her meaningless reaction—silence until lately—to the spate of

killings of church workers and activists belies her call. With such reaction, she will surely inspire more violence against those who fight for justice and peace. In fact, she is now promoting the culture of impunity and death.

I agree with the US state department when it said in its latest human rights report that "pervasive weakness in the rule of law,

official impunity and the wide disparity between rich and poor contributed to cynicism about official justice."

I cannot believe that GMA is sincere in her desire to abolish the death penalty for as long as extra-judicial killings go on and on.

—BERT ELIJAH CORRALES, gilbeys06@yahoo.com

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TV GUIDE

Saturday, May 27, 2006

Sayaw. Drama. Iba.

Shall We Dance?

The Celebrity Dance Challenge

Sunday 9 PM

hosted by Lucy Torres Gomez

ABC Iba Tayo!

ClickTheCity.com

Channel	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5	Kids TV	KNN	3:30PM	PDA	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	Wow Mating	7:00PM	8:00PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM	
ABC-CBN 2	ETK			Little Big Star	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	Queen Avenue	7:00PM	8:00PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM	
AXN				Comp Lado	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	Queen Avenue	7:00PM	8:00PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM	
Cartoon Network	Powerpuff Girls			Comp Lado	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	Queen Avenue	7:00PM	8:00PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM	
Cinema One				Comp Lado	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	Queen Avenue	7:00PM	8:00PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM	
Cinemax				Comp Lado	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	Queen Avenue	7:00PM	8:00PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM	
CNN				Comp Lado	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	Queen Avenue	7:00PM	8:00PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM	
Crime/Suspense				Comp Lado	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	Queen Avenue	7:00PM	8:00PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM	
Discovery Channel				Comp Lado	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	Queen Avenue	7:00PM	8:00PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM	
Disney Channel				Comp Lado	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	Queen Avenue	7:00PM	8:00PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM	
ESPN				Comp Lado	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	Queen Avenue	7:00PM	8:00PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM	
ETC				Comp Lado	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	Queen Avenue	7:00PM	8:00PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM	
ETC 2nd Avenue				Comp Lado	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	Queen Avenue	7:00PM	8:00PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM	
EWTV				Comp Lado	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	Queen Avenue	7:00PM	8:00PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM	
Fox News				Comp Lado	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	Queen Avenue	7:00PM	8:00PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM	
GMA 7				Comp Lado	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	Queen Avenue	7:00PM	8:00PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM	
Hallmark Channel				Comp Lado	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	Queen Avenue	7:00PM	8:00PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM	
HBO				Comp Lado	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	Queen Avenue	7:00PM	8:00PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM	
Hero TV				Comp Lado	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	Queen Avenue	7:00PM	8:00PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM	
IDC 13				Comp Lado	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	Queen Avenue	7:00PM	8:00PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM	
JackTV				Comp Lado	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	Queen Avenue	7:00PM	8:00PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM	
Lifestyle Network				Comp Lado	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	Queen Avenue	7:00PM	8:00PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM	
MTV Philippines				Comp Lado	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	Queen Avenue	7:00PM	8:00PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM	
MYX				Comp Lado	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	Queen Avenue	7:00PM	8:00PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM	
NBN				Comp Lado	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	Queen Avenue	7:00PM	8:00PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM	
Nickelodeon				Comp Lado	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	Queen Avenue	7:00PM	8:00PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM	
PBS				Comp Lado	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	Queen Avenue	7:00PM	8:00PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM	
RPN 9				Comp Lado	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	Queen Avenue	7:00PM	8:00PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM	
SDN 21				Comp Lado	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	Queen Avenue	7:00PM	8:00PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM	
Solar Sports				Comp Lado	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	Queen Avenue	7:00PM	8:00PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM	
Sports Plus				Comp Lado	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	Queen Avenue	7:00PM	8:00PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM	
Sun Movies				Comp Lado	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	Queen Avenue	7:00PM	8:00PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM	
Sun World				Comp Lado	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	Queen Avenue	7:00PM	8:00PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM	
Studio 23				Comp Lado	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	Queen Avenue	7:00PM	8:00PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM	

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Across the NATION

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MISUARI remains a force to be reckoned with as an OIC team wants to meet him to assess the success of the 1996 peace agreement that Misuari's MNLF signed with the government then under Fidel Ramos. PDI PHOTO

MILF wants in on talks with OIC in Jeddah

COTABATO CITY—THE MORO Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) should not be sidelined during the scheduled meeting between government officials, Nur Misuari and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), a rebel spokesperson said.

Eid Kabalu said that while the MILF agrees that the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) is important in the pursuit of peace in Mindanao, "the MILF is also equally important."

Kabalu said they wanted to attend the July tripartite meeting in Jeddah because the ongoing peace negotiations between the government and the MILF could be on the agenda.

The tripartite meeting was aimed at ironing out kinks in the implementation of the peace agreement that the government and Misuari signed in 1996.

The other rebel

Like the 1996 peace agreement, the OIC is also behind the peace negotiations between the government and the MILF.

But Kabalu said much as they wanted to be present in the tripartite meeting in Jeddah, "it is up for the government and the OIC to decide."

"The MILF's presence must be considered, but we cannot invite ourselves to be part of that meeting. The invitation should come from the government and the OIC," Kabalu said.

During the Jeddah meeting, the government, the MNLF and the 57-member pan-Islamic body, were expected to discuss the result of the assessment made by an OIC team on the implementation of the 1996 peace agreement.

Mindanao tour

The OIC team went around several Mindanao provinces and cities last week and found out there were some provisions in the agreement that were not being implemented.

"Our brothers in the MNLF are absolutely right in demanding for the full implementation of this accord and we understand their predicament. Ten years of intense waiting is long enough. It is easy to understand why there is restiveness in their ranks," Mohagher Iqbal, MILF chief negotiator, said.

Iqbal said among the provisions in the peace agreement that are not being implemented are the appointment of MNLF leaders in the Cabinet and the provision on socio-economic aid package, particularly for lower-ranked commanders of the rebel group. **Edwin O. Fernandez, Jeffrey Maitem and Nash B. Maulana, PDI Mindanao Bureau**

Benguet judge rules arrest of 11 youths by cops illegal

By Desiree Caluza and Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—A JUDGE IN BENGUET HAS ruled that policemen have illegally arrested 11 youths whom lawmen linked to the Feb. 10 raid of a military detachment in Mankayan town by communist rebels.

In a nine-page order issued on May 19, Judge Agapito Laoagan Jr. of the regional trial court in Buguias town quashed the government's evidence against the youths, who include a 16-year-old girl from Marikina City and a 17-year-old boy from Pasig City.

A joint task force composed of members of the Benguet police mobile group and an Army unit intercepted the group, known as "Punks 11," in Buguias on Feb. 14. They were aboard a truck and

were on their way to Sagada, Mt. Province, when arrested.

The judge said police could not justify the warrantless arrest of the two minors and their friends Anderson Alonzo, 18, and Jethro Villagracia, 21, of Davao City; Ron Pandino, 19, of Laguna; Darwin Alagar, 20, of Pangasinan; Alduz Christian Mañosa, 18, Jefferson de la Rosa, 20, and Neil Russel Balajadia, 25, of Pasig City; Arvie Nuñez, 21, of Lucena City; and Rundren Lao, 24, of Davao City.

In his order, Laoagan said witnesses identified the youths as members of the group who attacked the Army detachment. But the witnesses appeared in a police headquarters in Buguias only after the group had been arrested.

"In warrantless arrests under Section 5, paragraph b of Rule 113 of the Rules of Court, which is otherwise referred to as a 'hot pursuit' arrest, it is required that the arresting officer has probable cause," Laoagan wrote.

He said "the accused were arrested four days after the alleged incident."

"The Supreme Court has ruled that an arrest made one day after the consummation of the crime does not comply with the sense of immediacy required under the aforementioned rule," he said.

"Furthermore, the arresting officers were not present and were

not actual eyewitnesses to the crime. In fact, they became aware of the identities of the accused as the perpetrators of the incident only after the witnesses identified them," he said.

The judge also noted that while the government case against the group relies on witnesses' testimonies, "raw intelligence information is not sufficient ground for a warrantless arrest."

But Laoagan told the INQUIRER on Friday that his order stopped short of directing the immediate release of 10 of the detained youths.

"Worthy to note, however, is the ruling that even if the arrest of a person is illegal, supervening events may bar his release or discharge from detention or custody," he said.

He said judges used to follow a judicial policy that required the release of detainees as soon as a court

rejects a prosecutor's evidence.

But new court procedures issued in 2000 no longer make this practice an automatic consequence once evidence against the detainees are quashed, he said.

He said his order grants the government prosecutor 15 days to review his procedures, and conduct a new preliminary investigation "so they [the detained youths] can properly submit their counter-affidavits."

Lao's circumstances are different, however, Laoagan said. Lao had alerted the National Bureau of Investigation and the Department of Social Welfare and Development about the youths' arrest when he escaped from Camp Molintas on the day of his arrest and fled to Baguio.

Lao claimed they were tortured by policemen. The police, however, denied the charges.



RUNNING WET

An unidentified person runs into the fury of tropical storm "Caloy" that recently lashed at Iloilo City and other parts of the country. The storm brought knee-deep floodwaters to Iloilo City and stalled traffic. **ARNOLD ALMACEN/PDI VISAYAS BUREAU**

ROUNDUP

More on 'Da Vinci'

BACOLOD CITY—The Couples for Christ in Negros Occidental is calling on its members not to see the movie "The Da Vinci Code," which it called blasphemous and an attack on the Catholic faith. "The best response is not to see the movie. Do not contribute your money to funding the secular and liberal forces, especially in media, that seek to weaken or destroy what we hold dear," a CFM-Negros statement said. The film, based on the international best-selling novel of the same name by Dan Brown, has become a box office hit worldwide, despite calls for a boycott of the movie. "Some say it should not affect the faith of those who are well grounded. But that is not the point. The point is that it is blasphemous and so we should reject it," the CFM statement said. "This is not about an intellectual discussion on fact or fiction, or on its value just as entertainment, but this is about the evil forces that are using all sorts of things in order to bring down the Church and destroy the work of God."

Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau

OFW deployment stopped

DAVAO CITY—The deployment of at least 314 Filipino medical workers to Libya was delayed after the Libyan government adopted a new system for hiring foreign and local workers, the Department of Labor and Employment said. Citing a report from the Tripoli-based Philippine Overseas Labor Office, the DOLE said the creation of a central committee replaced the decentralized system previously adopted in Libya. Labor Attaché to Libya Jaime Gimenez said in that report that the central committee, which is under Libya's General People's Committee for Manpower, Training, and Employment, has taken over the power to hire medical workers from the shaa'blyya or Libyan municipalities. Gimenez said the 314 Filipinos were already scheduled for deployment but, because of the new system, only 151 job orders had been approved. The central committee, he said, decided that only those bound for the Tripoli Medical Center and the Esbea Military Hospital would be hired at the moment. A total of 5,326 OFWs were deployed to Libya in 2005, most of them medical workers.

Judy Quiros, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Army courses open

DAVAO CITY—The Philippine Army has announced the availability of at least 225 slots for its Officer Candidate Course (OCC) and Officer Preparatory Course (OPC). Those vying for the slots will have to undergo a series of tests which will be conducted in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. Interested Mindanao applicants should bring with them their transcripts of record, authenticated birth certificates, college diplomas and valid ID cards to the Army Recruitment Center (ARC) in Camp Evangelista in Patag, Cagayan de Oro City or to the ARC-Mindanao Extension Office on Acharon Boulevard in Bula, General Santos City. Inquiries could be directed to Capt. Ferdinand Rondina at 0910-6712417, or e-mail rondina_apmc@yahoo.com; MSgt. Marclano Alva, 0921-6081730, SSgt. Teofilo Cinches 0926-5110030 and Cpl. Julie Racaza at 0920-3244210.

Joselle Badilla, PDI Mindanao Bureau

2 NPA rebs slain

BUTUAN CITY—At least two New People's Army (NPA) rebels were killed while three militiamen and a village chieftain were wounded during an hour-long clash in a remote village of Bayugan in Agusan del Sur. Lt. Col. Rolando Manalo, commander of the Army's 23rd Infantry Battalion, said his men were on their way to secure a mass wedding in Sitio Wilderness in Barangay Carmel when ambushed by a still undetermined number of rebels around 2:30 p.m. Thursday.

Franklin A. Calliguid, PDI Mindanao Bureau

P150M airport land budget out

LEGAZPI CITY—The Department of Transportation and Communications here in Bicol has already released the P150-million budget for the acquisition of the land in Barangay Alobo in Daraga, Albay, where the Southern Luzon International Airport will be built. The estimated cost of the construction of this first international airport in Southern Luzon is P3.6 billion, according to Daraga Mayor Jerry Jaucian. The bidding and determining of the actual site is set on June 7.

Ephraim Aguilar, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Albay, Sorsogon govs back mining test run

LEGAZPI CITY—THE GOVERNORS of Albay and Sorsogon provinces yesterday signed a joint statement endorsing a test run of the Lafayette Phils Inc. (LPI) mining operations to check if it has met standards set by the government following two mine spills last year.

Governors Fernando Gonzalez of Albay and Raul Lee of Sorsogon said in their statement that LPI spent almost P400 million to put in place the remedial measures that would ensure no future spills occur and "it would be a grave in-

justice not to know if these work."

"That the company has been asking to be tested under the full monitoring of all parties... speaks of unprecedented transparency... And to think that all it is asking is for due process to be followed," said the two governors in their joint statement.

The statement was issued just as members of the Rapu-Rapu Fact-finding Commission (RRF-FC) denied accusations that they lavishly spent government funds in the course of their investiga-

tion on the operation of LPI.

Jose Sarmiento, head of the RRF-FC secretariat, said the commission operated on a shoestring budget as Malacañang released only 50 percent of the fund they requested, refuting allegations that they had a good time at the commission.

Sarmiento told the INQUIRER that they requested for P10 million but only about P5 million was released to them from the operating fund of the President.

The bulk of the fund went to

the conduct of committee hearings, payment for food, venue and travel expenditures of those invited to testify before the commission, Sarmiento said.

Commission vice chair Charles Avila said the criticisms being hurled at them were just part of the efforts to discredit the commission to weaken the effect of its report which was considered as adverse to the mining industry.

Bobby Labalan and Ephraim Aguilar, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau



FOR THE RED CROSS

Sen. Richard Gordon, also chair of the Philippine National Red Cross, shakes hands with Tony Biggs, chair and chief executive officer of Fontana Leisure Parks in Clark Field, Pampanga during a ceremonial turnover of P2 million in donations by the Fontana to the Red Cross.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



INNER BEAUTY

Visitors take a boat ride into the heart of a mangrove forest that produces lush vegetation along the banks of the Sabang River at the Bambua Nature Park Resort in Palawan. The nature trip is one of many offered by the province, known as the country's last frontier.

RYAN LIM

CHR to probe shooting of civilians in town where Army was shot at

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—THE COMMISSION on Human Rights (CHR) has started investigating the shooting of civilians by soldiers in San Remigio town in Antique early this month.

CHR investigator Edgar Luis said they will determine if the shooting was a result of a "legitimate firefight" between soldiers and other armed groups.

"We would determine if the civilians' rights were violated because they are not members of any armed group," Luis told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

Epifania Cabaya, 65, died and four of her family members, including two children, were wounded after soldiers fired upon villagers of Barangay Panapanan I in San Remigio on May 5.

The Army's Task Force Panay (TFP) had said that armed villagers fired upon the soldiers and that the two groups mistook each other for communist rebels.

But former assemblyman Arturo Pacificador, legal counsel of the survivors, said there was no encounter and that soldiers fired upon members of the Cabaya family who were inside their house.

Pacificador said he will file murder and frustrated murder

charges against soldiers on behalf of members of the Cabaya family who were killed and wounded in the shooting.

A team from the CHR regional office talked to the victims in the capital town of San Jose on Wednesday but Luis said the victims were still hesitant to talk to the investigators.

"They still could not talk long because of their injuries," said Luis.

The two children, aged 9 and 11 years old, are also afraid of persons wearing uniforms. Luis said they will be referred to psychiatrists for examination.

In an earlier interview, Col. Gregorio Fajardo, TFP commander, said the soldiers were just defending themselves after "armed civilians" fired at troops of the 31st Reconnaissance Company who were conducting an operation after receiving reports that armed persons were in the village.

"The civilians fired and continued shooting at our troops even after the soldiers repeatedly identified themselves," Fajardo said.

Fajardo relieved Lt. Rey Auguis and the sergeants who were leading the troops involved in the gunfight to pave the way for an impartial investigation.

Environmental group turning out to be bogus

BUTUAN CITY—THE OMBUDSMAN Mindanao ordered the closure of the office of an environmental group here for allegedly using the antigraft body in its extortion activities.

Marco Anacleto Buena, Ombudsman Mindanao spokesperson based in Davao City, identified the environmental group as Bantay Kalikasan.

He said that last week, a team

from the Ombudsman and the local police also tore down one of Bantay Kalikasan's satellite checkpoints in the riverside village of Amparo.

The team, Buena said, also arrested the checkpoint's caretaker, who was identified as Baldomero Arlique.

"Criminal charges are set to be filed against him and the alleged founder of the group, Mr. Willy

Rama," he said.

Rama is said to be based in Manila.

The INQUIRER sought clarification from the ABS-CBN environmental group bearing the same name but a staffer said he was not familiar with Rama.

The staffer also said ABS-CBN's Bantay Kalikasan has no offices outside Quezon City.

Buena said investigation con-

ducted by the Ombudsman showed that the Bantay Kalikasan here has engaged in blackmail and extorted money from erring environment officials, politicians, loggers and tree farmers.

The group, he said, also passed itself off as an accredited anti-graft body.

But Buena said the Ombudsman has never accredited the group.

"They used their bogus accreditation with the Ombudsman's corruption prevention program to blackmail and extort money from officials, log traders and tree farmers," Buena told the INQUIRER.

Asked how intensive the group's alleged illegal activities are, Buena said Bantay Kalikasan has even set up monitoring stations and checkpoints along the

Agusan River.

He said the group's activities have not only placed the Ombudsman in a bad light but also indirectly worsened illegal logging in Caraga.

"The illegal logging trade in the region, I would say, has abated because the traders thought that Bantay Kalikasan was sanctioned," he said. **Franklin M. Caliguid, PDI Mindanao Bureau**

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Filipinos eat fewer eggs, says DA report

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE—Compared to some of their Asian neighbors, Filipinos eat fewer eggs. They consumed three times fewer eggs than did Thais, six times fewer than did Malaysians and seven times fewer than Koreans last year.

That's because the per capita consumption of eggs in Thailand, Malaysia and South Korea in 2005 reached 148, 324 and 365, reports from the Department of Agriculture showed.

This low consumption pattern is the "most major problem" of the chicken layer industry now, Pedro Ocampo, executive director of the DA's livestock development council, said in a presentation at the Luzon-wide hog and poultry congress here on Thursday.

The demand is low amid an increasing supply, he noted. From 243,380 metric tons (MT) in 2000, the volume of egg production rose to 320,344 MT in 2005.

The problem, Ocampo said, is "mainly due to misconceptions about eggs" which the agency has been battling for the last five years.

Egg, he said, is perceived to be high in cholesterol. It is also thought to cause allergy. Egg is also regarded only as a breakfast dish.

All these, Ocampo said, are not entirely correct. "An egg a day is okay," he said, repeating a campaign pitch in 2000 that has not done significantly to increase consumption.

A piece of small-sized egg sells in the market for P3.75. **Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk**

Town seeks divine help to get peace

IROSIN, SORSOGON—TOWNSFOLK ARE turning to prayers to put a stop to the spate of killings that has gripped this town with fear since October last year.

Residents move around in prayer and novenas every 4 p.m., according to information of officer Neneth Esplana.

Two more men were added to the growing list of those killed.

Dante Fumera and Allan Fundano were shot dead while attending the wake of Domingo Habla, also a victim of the series of killings, said Senior Insp. Dionisio Laceda, the town's police chief. **Bobby Q. Labalan, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau**

INQUIRER *Visayas*

'School for Excellence' for village kids

By Vicente S. Labro
Ormoc City

A YEAR AGO, A STATE-OWNED POWER FIRM has dreamed of producing high-caliber graduates in seven years from the grade schools of two obscure villages atop one of the high mountains in Leyte. Now its dream is slowly turning into reality through a project dubbed as "School for Excellence."

The Philippine National Oil Co.-Energy Development Corp. (PNOC-EDC), which operates the country's largest geothermal field located in Leyte, is undertaking the School for Excellence project, in coordination with the education department and concerned local government units and the host communities.

The project beneficiaries are the children of poor upland farmers in PNOC-EDC's host communities—Barangay Tongonan in Ormoc City and Barangay Tongonan in Kananga, Leyte, which are just about 300 meters away from each other.

Started last year and only for the preparatory and Grade 1 levels, the project already had 304 pupil-beneficiaries in the elementary school of Tongonan-Ormoc and 372 in Tongonan-Kananga with 16 teachers handling classes in the two grade schools.

Paul A. Aquino, president and chief executive officer of PNOC-EDC, says his company wants to create a difference in their host communities, "and the best way we thought we could create that difference is by starting with the young citizens of Ormoc and Kananga."

"More than ensuring reliable, cost-efficient and environment-friendly energy for the Filipino people, we remain committed to helping the government improve the quality of life in the countryside through our Balik-Biyaya efforts," he emphasizes.

Educational support projects

Balik-Biyaya, or giving back to the communities the socio-economic benefits of geothermal power, is PNOC-EDC's revitalized corporate social responsibility (CRS) program.

The School for Excellence is one

of the educational support projects of PNOC-EDC under its CRS program, which includes health enhancement, livelihood provision and environmental protection.

Aquino recalls that the school project started in January 2005 when DepEd invited PNOC-EDC to become its partner in a pilot project through DepEd's Adopt-A-School program.

After conducting planning sessions and coordination with DepEd, the local government units and the Tongonan communities, PNOC-EDC eventually entered into a memorandum of agreement on May 27, 2005 with those concerned groups, and this concretized the school project that is now known as the School for Excellence.

"Our children in Ormoc and Kananga deserve to be given access to [the] future through brilliant initiatives such as this Schools for Excellence project that we have built in our host barangays," Aquino says.

Aquino explains that they opted to use the term "school for excellence" instead of "school of excellence" because the former is proactive. "In other words, we are striving for excellence," he says.

"Our fervent aim is to send these kids to prestigious colleges and universities [in the country]," he added.

The project hopes to improve the children's access to educational facilities and supplies, increase the number of students finishing primary education with improved educational standards, enhance the capability of teachers to effectively deliver educational programs, and strengthen the involvement of the parents and the community.

Under the project, PNOC-EDC will provide the "hardware" such as



PUPILS of the Tongonan Elementary School in Kananga, Leyte, pose for a souvenir photo with PNOC-EDC and DepEd officials and other visitors led by Education Secretary Fe Hidalgo and PNOC-EDC president and CEO Paul Aquino when they visited the school recently. VEN LABRO

classrooms, playground and sports facilities, feeding centers, speech laboratory, science laboratory, computer rooms, audio-visual rooms, home economics rooms, industrial arts rooms, and school supplies, among others.

The power company will also provide the "software" that includes school personnel (librarians, computer instructors, and speech instructors), training for teachers, environment education and feeding program.

So far, PNOC-EDC has constructed school buildings, classrooms, feeding centers and a faculty center in the two schools. These were aside from the new bags, uniforms, health kits, and school supplies given to the school children, the blackboards, bookshelves, books, and tables and chairs provided to both the teachers and pupils, and the honoraria for the preparatory school teachers.

PNOC-EDC also implements the

school feeding and parental intervention programs.

Good marks

And as if to show how serious they are in implementing this seven-year project, the PNOC-EDC personnel conducted early this May a joint assessment of the two Tongonan elementary schools.

Some top officials of the power company including the project's school governing board, top officials of DepEd, Ormoc City, Kananga and Tongonan communities, as well as teachers and representatives of the parents and school children attended the gathering held at the administration building of the Leyte Geothermal Production Field in Ormoc City.

Aquino led the PNOC-EDC group while DepEd Secretary Fe Hidalgo was the guest of honor. DepEd Regional Director Sol Matugas and the schools superintendents of Ormoc City and of Leyte,

Sol Lumarda and Violeta Alibangbang, respectively, accompanied Hidalgo.

Aquino says the joint assessment provides them an opportunity to evaluate their efforts in the past school year and plan for the remaining six years of the project.

Among the project's gains in its first year, aside from the provision of the "hardware" and "software" components of the project, were the significant increase in attendance, improved nutritional status, improved physical well-being, increased energy level, and improved performance of the pupil-beneficiaries.

The pupils in the two schools also registered good marks when assessed on school readiness, achievements and reading status. Tongonan-Ormoc has in fact attained a zero non-reader mark during the reading test.

Hidalgo says she is "impressed" of the school's accomplishments

even as she challenged the Tongonan schools "to be national models in education."

Best teachers

As part of DepEd's commitment to the project, she vows to assign three more of the best teachers to the Tongonan grade schools this coming school year, even as she lauded the teachers and school personnel in the two Tongonan schools who are involved in the project for their commitment and dedication.

During the same gathering, representatives of the concerned local governments and the host communities including those of the parent-teachers-community associations pledged to provide some services, food and other necessities for the project.

Pupils Lory Ann Gallardo and Glyscia Icaagaw, in behalf of their fellow pupils, thanked their benefactors, especially the PNOC-EDC, for the School for Excellence.

Nature, adventure highs in Iloilo's Concepcion islands

By Hazel P. Villa
Concepcion, Iloilo

AFTER HAVING SPENT many summer holidays in the same overcrowded and over hyped tourist destinations, the jaded Filipino vacationer starts looking for that singular beach or mountain that can still impress.

As I happen to live in Panay Island which is blessed with nature's attractions such as the fantastic white sand islands of Boracay in Aklan and Semirara in Antique, intriguing island coves of Guimaras, winding caves of Capiz, and the ancient churches of Iloilo, I thought I had seen everything.

That is, until I and some friends set foot on the islands of Concepcion in northern Iloilo last Holy Week.

Some 30 minutes boat ride away from mainland Concepcion, we espied a white sandbar about half a kilometer long, framed in the distant horizon by the sentinel mountain of Pan de Azucar and other islets.

The water is glass clear and you can count a handful of Filipinos and some Koreans who must have had the same spirit as Leonardo DiCaprio looking for that secluded un-

forgettable getaway in "The Beach."

At the heart of the 18-hectare island called Bulubadiangan is a secondary-growth forest and at the edges are some mangroves.

With a population of 50 men, women and children living in 12 houses scattered throughout the island, it is a typical coastal community that subsists on fishing and abalone farming.

Eco-tourism

Since 2004 however, the island's residents have been part of what the local government unit calls community-based ecological tourism (CBET) with Bulubadiangan Island now going by the name of Sandbar Island Beach Resort.

Still in its stage of infancy, Sandbar Island Resort doesn't even have a grocery store or canteen and is unspoiled as unspoiled could get.

Visitors may opt to rent one of the two bamboo cottages near the sandbar or pay for a home stay in any of the concrete houses of the Eusala and Fransisco families who make up the island's native population.

Simple electrical gadgets and lights are run by solar energy in the Eusala ancestral house while the rest of the cottages in the beach area are powered by a mercifully not-so-noisy generator.

There's no refrigerator and fresh fish are bought from neighboring Agho Island, also with its own generous spread of white sand beaches.

Any other needs such as rice and canned food you have to bring yourself and request Manang Josephine, the self-appointed island cook, to prepare for a minimal fee.

If you manage not to get distracted by the awesome northern Iloilo sunset that shows off majestically by the sandbar, you can join the natives in panginhas or the collecting of edible marine life during low tide before sunset.

The same collecting done in the evenings with the aid of a torch or petromax is called *panulo* with the catch making up the bulk of the dinner viands.

At 6 p.m. around the islands of Concepcion, boats start to move off to sea and the petromax lights begin to flicker as fishermen release a special gear for pangawil or squid jigging that lasts until 8 p.m.

These evening activities you can do at Sandbar Resort and elsewhere in the town's 16 islands as long as the languorous moon or the stars



PUMPBOAT operators slowly guide their boats towards the Concepcion pier at sunset.

that seem to rain down don't drive you to a mild case of lunacy.

Adventure destination

Daytime in northern Iloilo shouts adventure with island hopping, snorkeling, scuba diving in two sunken World War II Japanese warships, and mountain climbing in Pan de Azucar.

"We adopted community-based eco-tourism because Concepcion is a nature and adventure destination. It is one of the few places in Panay where the biodiversity of flora and fauna is high and the marine ecosystem is in a good state," said Mario Lazarito, 40, the mayor's development consultant and municipal tourism officer-designate.

Under the leadership of Mayor Raul Baniyas, last year's Rafael M. Salas awardee for Population and Development, Concepcion has had nine places classified as Marine Protected Areas (MPAS) with Barangay Polopina in Igbon Island included in the MPAS on April 27 during the town's Tampisaw Festival held in the islands.

Most of the seagrass beds in the islands are intact and the coastal town has a well-preserved coral atoll in the 27-hectare Baleguian Island that teems with marine life.

This same island that is two hours boat ride from the mainland, also houses one of the most modern maritime lighthouses in the country, constructed in 1998 with funding from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation, said Lazarito.

Town officials are hoping that the CBET will awaken Concepcion folks' awareness of preserving their environment while getting income from its beauty.

"CBET was a program designed and implemented in 2002 to give capacities to local people to use indigenous and local resources," said Lazarito, who admits that there is still much to be done to develop the technical capability of Concepcion's CBET advocates.

Concepcion has two guides accredited by the Department of Tourism, nine are local guides with basic training and two are mountain guides for Pan de Azucar, which at 573 ft above sea level, can be scaled in three hours.

Rex Eusala, 50, one of the owners of the Sandbar Island Beach Resort in Bulubadiangan Island is thankful for the CBET and attempts at putting more MPAS because these have stopped residents of neighboring islands from endlessly collecting the edible marine life in the five-

hectare marine habitat beside the sandbar.

"People have become so many that left to themselves, they will destroy the habitats of sea creatures just so they will have something to sell or eat. They have destroyed their own panginhas grounds, that is why they are coming to Bulubadiangan," said Eusala in Hiligaynon.

Tampisaw Festival

To help people appreciate the importance of their environment and preserve the traditional coastal way of life, the local government put up the Tampisaw Festival in 1999.

The Tampisaw festival is a "home-grown, community-based and eco-tourism festivity dedicated to the protection and conservation of Mother Earth and the celebration of the cultural richness of Concepcion."

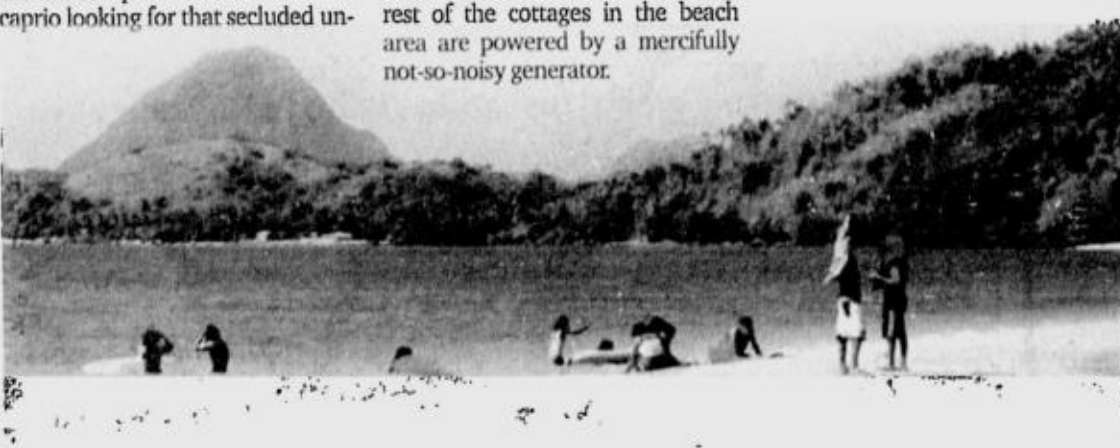
This year's Tampisaw Festival, held on April 27 to 29 at Barangay Tambaliza, Pan de Azucar Island, was the launching pad of "Panabo sa Tampisaw Festival."

Lazarito explains that in the olden days, groups of women and children from a community would meet the fishermen to check out the day's catch and in the end, would share the bounty with relatives and friends in the belief that sharing is thanksgiving, thus the term "panabo."

"Panabo sa Tampisaw" aims to unite Concepcion's island dwellers into retaining environment-friendly practices such as hook-and-line fishing and establishing goodwill among communities by selling the fish catch at less the market price.

For us visitors, it is heart-warming to know that behind the clear, azure waters and sun-drenched islands are stories of people doing their best to protect their natural wealth and become united in the process.

Concepcion's tourism officer-designate Mario Lazarito can be contacted at 0918-3119523.



EVEN AT LENT, the little-known Sandbar Island Beach Resort in Concepcion's Bulubadiangan Island has only a handful of excursionists frolicking in its waters. Behind them juts Pan de Azucar Mountain that is home to white-breasted sea eagles and some wild orchids.

PHOTOS BY HAZEL P. VILLA

News

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Copies of 'Da Vinci' book, film burned

By Nini Valera and Tina G. Santos

THE HOTTEST SPOT IN MANILA was reserved for the controversial novel and movie "The Da Vinci Code" yesterday as protesters saying it blasphemed the Catholic faith burned copies of the book and pirated VCDs and DVDs of the movie.

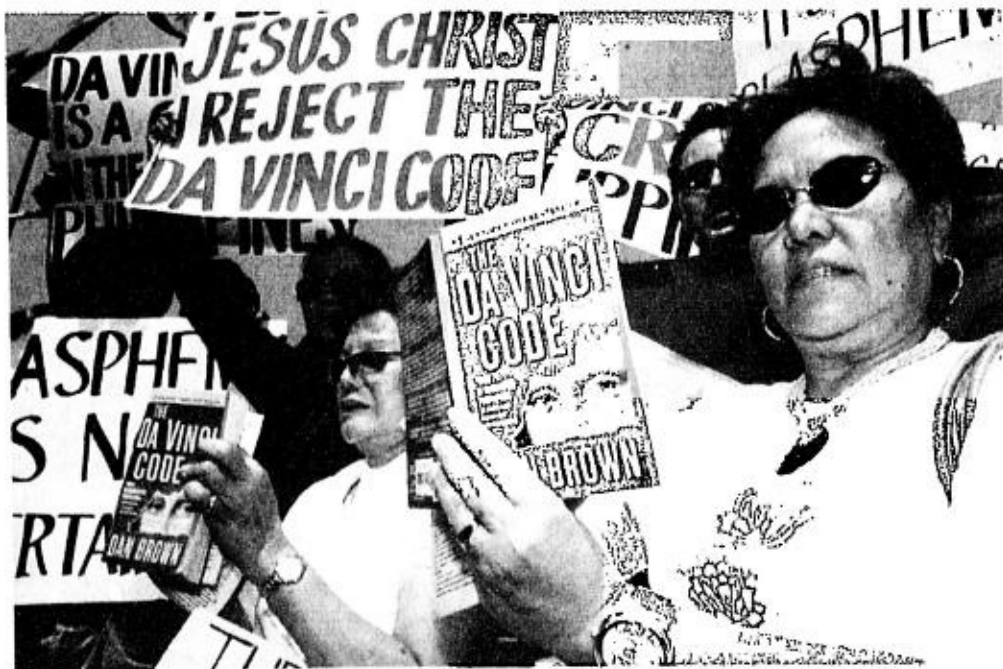
A bonfire, fueled by Dan Brown's books and pirates' copies of movies based on it, was lit at the Bonifacio Shrine at a prayer rally organized by youth and religious groups calling Dan Brown's work a sin against Christianity.

Some students, however, expressed regret as they watched fire consume copies of the book in a ceremony reminiscent of the days when suspected witches were burned at the stake.

"We still haven't read it," said Jeremy, 16, a member of one of the youth organizations. "I would have wanted to read it, but it's too expensive to buy. It costs about P800 to P1,000."

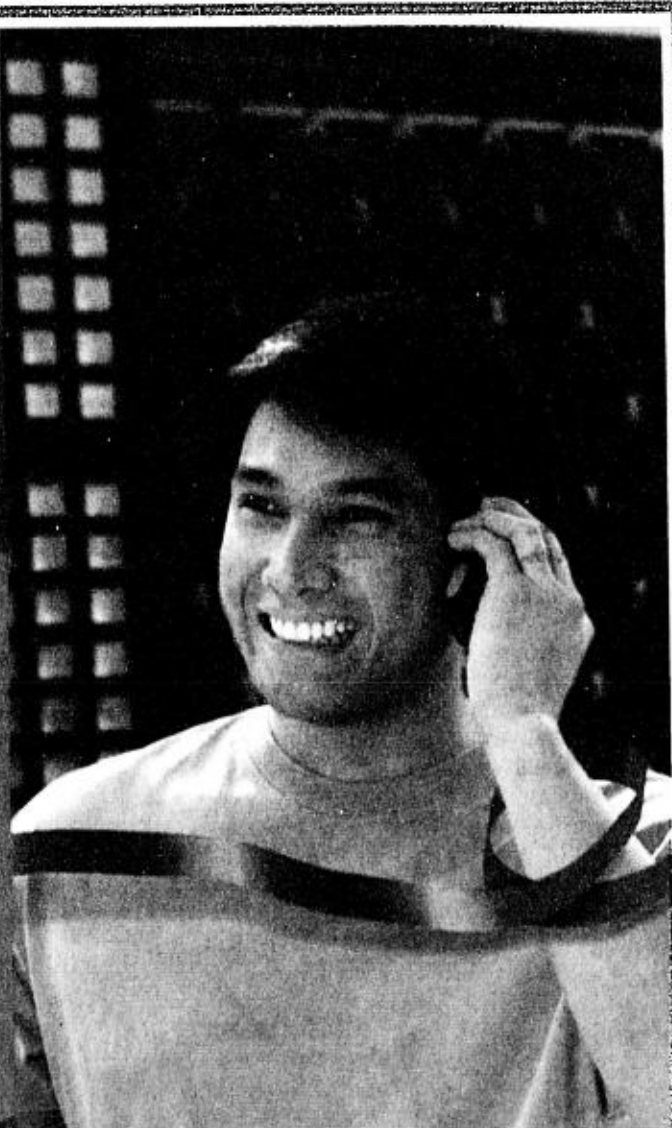
The high cost of the book could have driven organizers of the rally to be more symbolic, actually burning only three copies of the book and throwing photocopies of the book's cover

BURN, DAN BROWN, BURN. The bonfire was held Friday at the Bonifacio Shrine behind the Manila City Hall. The Da Vinci Code, the movie, based on Dan Brown's book is banned in all movie houses in Manila. REM ZAMORA



SHOWING DISGUST for the book and the movie, religious groups and other organizations led by the City of Manila, tore off pages from their copies of the book and set them on fire. REM ZAMORA

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to create a bigger fire.

Some of the youth in the rally said in jest that the only way they could read the book was to pick up the torn pages and put them together.

News of the book burning started to circulate in coffee shops about two weeks before the movie opened. The idea was first attributed to a group of Ateneo alumni who protested what they said was the book's attacks on the Catholic faith.

Jesse Paredes, an Ateneo alumnus and frequent bar customer in Malate, was being touted as the leader of the book burning movement, until Manila Mayor Lito Atienza embraced the idea and agreed to hold the prayer rally in the city.

"God is big in Manila," Paredes said.

He said the timing for the book burning yesterday was right.

"It's better since people already saw the movie and know what's wrong with it," he said.

The book burning came a day after Manila banned the showing of the movie on the strength of a resolution of the city council that said it was crime to "exhibit films that offend religion." SM Cinemas nationwide also banned the movie.

The rally, initiated by members of the St. James Parish in Ayala, Alabang, drew about 500 people, mostly students, from schools and universities in Manila.

Mike Bichara, a member of the group, said it was meant to dramatize their sentiment against the book and the movie.

"We, as Christians, should not support the

movie because it's against our religion and the divinity of Christ. Imagine, for them to say that Christ married Mary Magdalene is blasphemous," Bichara said.

He owns several moviehouses in the provinces and said he banned "The Da Vinci Code," too.

He said people in the provinces won't be interested in the movie.

"They don't understand it," he said. "It's mostly dialogue anyway."

But if the long queues were to be the basis, the movie made a killing in theaters where it was shown.

"The controversy over it has made me more eager to watch it," said Danny, a moviegoer.

Protesters who joined the book burning ritual carried placards with messages like "We reject the Da Vinci Code," "Fact or fiction, it's still blasphemous."

"The youth have spoken, the film is just the start of many more diabolic attempts to make the youth stray. And as a communion of believers, we here in Manila will never tolerate this," said Michael Figdor, a youth member of the Association of Angels of Adoration.

Rev. Regino Cortez, who said he was a member of the Pontifical Bible Commission in Vatican, said he wrote a book titled "Exegetical Review of the Da Vinci Code" to point out Dan Brown's mistakes.

"There had been a lot of inconsistencies. The author claims that the relic of Mary Magdalene can be seen in the Louvre museum in Paris. But the truth is that it lies at present in Southern France," he said.

Palace considering P1-B package to help victims of pre-need firms

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

MALACANANG IS CONSIDERING A PROPOSAL to provide subsidies to some 100,000 victims of cash-strapped pre-need companies through a P1-billion increase in allocation to the Commission on Higher Education in this year's budget.

But Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya was quick to point out that the additional funding for CHED was not meant to bail out the troubled Pacific Plans Inc. and College Assurance Plan.

"[W]e want to stress that this is not a corporate bailout because we are only helping the victims as a stop-gap measure while their pre-need companies sort out their problems," Andaya said.

Under a proposal put forward by Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, CHED would then instruct state colleges and universities to provide tuition subsidy of P10,000 each to students who would show proof that they were among the victims of the failed pre-need companies. President Macapagal-Arroyo had previously approved the release of P500 million to CHED to boost its scholarship programs.

"With the school year opening, the pre-need mess is likely to rage more than its usual intensity as more pre-need contracts become due, schools raise their tuition, gas stations raise their pump prices and other juicy issues affecting the administration subsidy," Salceda said.

According to Salceda, the Palace can lobby to increase the CHED allocation when the bicameral conference committee begins discussion on the 2006 budget next month.

In a meeting with plan holders last year, the President said she would look into the possibility of tapping P1 billion in dividends from the Government Service and Insurance System to subsidize the tuition and school miscellaneous of pre-need victims last year. But Ms Arroyo later learned that this diversion was not legal under government rules.

Last Wednesday, controversial businessman Mark Jimenez pledged to donate P50 million to plan holders, who had organized themselves into Parents Enabling Parents Coalition to pursue their claims against PPI and CAP. He said he was hoping this would start a campaign to raise funds for pre-need victims.

Hunger causing global instability, says Nobel laureate

A NOBEL LAUREATE SAID YESTERDAY THAT hunger is causing global instability and urged governments to spend more on food production.

"We still have a large number of miserable, hungry people, and this contributes to world instability," Norman Borlaug told an Asian Development Bank forum in Manila. "Human misery is explosive, and you better not forget that."

Borlaug, 92, won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1970 for improving crop management practices that transformed food production in much of the developing world. He developed a high-yield wheat that helped stop starvation in India and Pakistan in the 1960s.

Borlaug said 56 percent of countries with

the highest levels of hunger are wracked by civil wars.

He said governments should spend less on arms and more on agricultural research and infrastructure support to the countryside to boost food production.

Borlaug also criticized groups opposed to genetic engineering in plants and chemical fertilizers, saying new technology has dramatically increased food production and staved off hunger in many countries.

"If you stand still and don't change, with the population still growing—74 million more people every year—you are walking backward," he said.

AP

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WHAT'S INSIDE

■ Traffic rerouting experiment along Shaw starts in June

/A18



No trace of missing Bayan member

By Luigi A. del Puerto

A MILITANT PARTY-LIST GROUP YESTERDAY demanded that government security forces release, or at very the least, acknowledge that they have in their custody one of its members who was abducted last May 16 in Makati City.

Witnesses said the men who snatched Rolando Porter in Makati City had identified themselves as law enforcers, a claim the police have denied.

Eyewitness

"We have strong suspicions that Isapf (Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines) and CIDG (Criminal Investigation and Detection Group) agents were the ones who abducted Porter," said Bayan Muna deputy secretary general Roberto de Castro.

Bayan Muna said that based on an eyewitness account, three men forced Porter into a waiting L300 van with license plate WAA 201 as he was buying a phone card for his mobile phone from a store at the corner of San Rafael and Sacramento streets in Barangay Olympia, a short walk from his house.

The manner in which the "Erap 5" were arrested in Quezon City on Monday indicated that government forces could also be behind Porter's abduction, De Castro said.

Admission

It took the military 48 hours to admit they had in its custody five supporters of former President Estrada who were arrested on Monday in Quezon City for allegedly being involved in a plot to assassinate several Cabinet officials.

The five were freed Thursday night. Porter's half-brother, Mario Bravo, said his disappearance might have something to do with his work at Bayan Muna, a militant organization often linked to left-leaning forces.

Ordeal

Upon learning of the Erap 5's ordeal, he said it was possible government forces could have taken his brother under their custody as well.

"That is how I feel. His group, Bayan Muna, is against the Gloria (Macapagal-Arroyo administration). They could have taken him," Bravo said.

Bravo said he and members of the human rights group Karapatan would visit police precincts as well as Camp Crame and Camp Aguinaldo on Monday to try to locate his brother.

Lineup

In a text message yesterday, De Castro demanded that the government produce members of the team that arrested the "Erap 5."

"Witnesses in Porter's abduction may be able to identify those who took him in a lineup," the Bayan Muna official said, adding that after hearing tales of torture from the "Erap 5," his group feared that Porter could be going through the same ordeal.

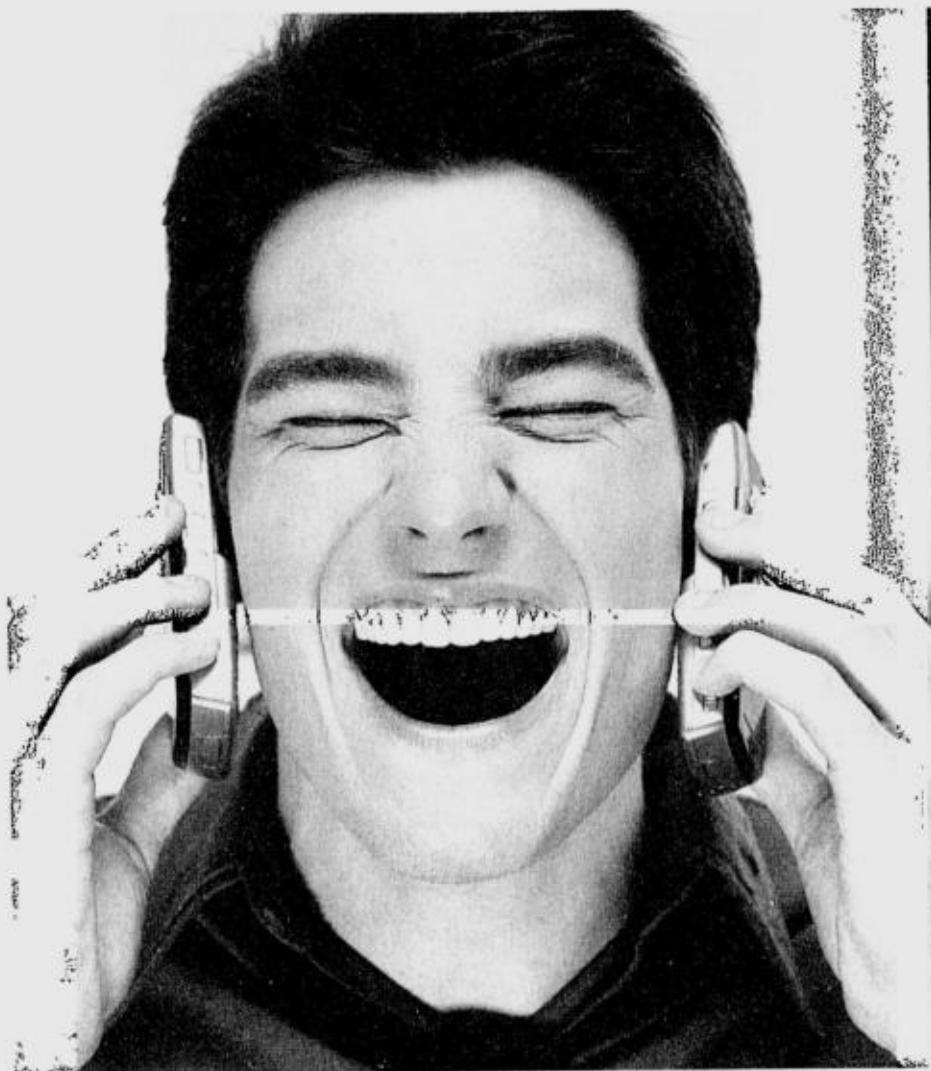
The government, he said, has no "moral ascendancy" at this time to deny Porter's abduction.

Commenting on the Porter case, Philippine National Police spokesperson Sr. Supt. Samuel Pagdilao Jr. said the police do not arrest people and hide the act.

Charges

"If there is a warrant for the arrest, we bring him (or her) to the court that issued the warrant. If it is a warrantless arrest, we file charges within the required period," he said.

Pagdilao said that as far as Porter was concerned, he had not received a report that a police unit had arrested the missing Bayan Muna member.



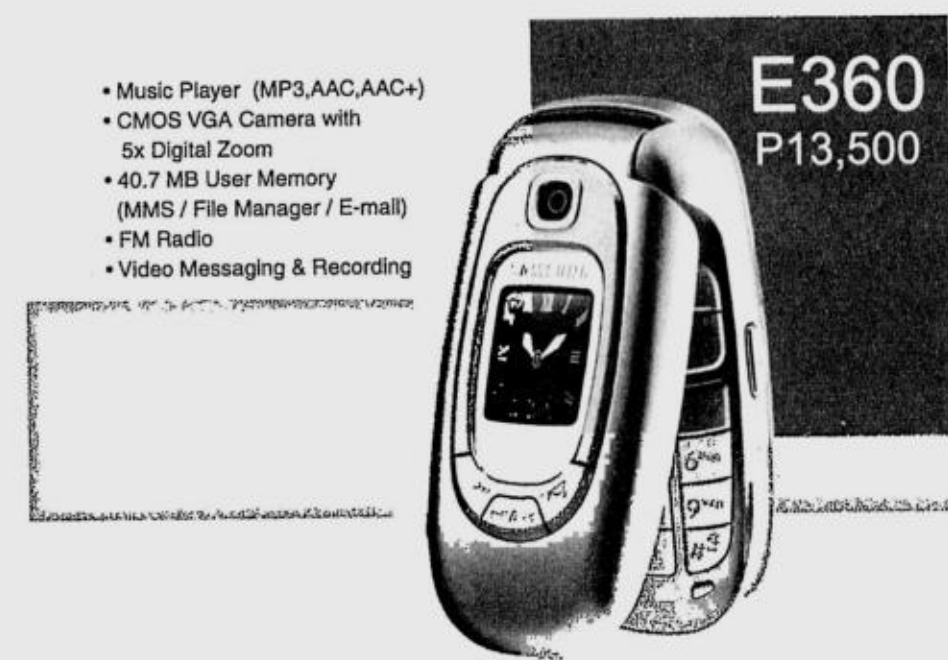
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Traffic rerouting at Shaw begins in June

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

IN PREPARATION FOR HEAVIER TRAFFIC AS classes open next week, the Mandaluyong City government will implement an experimental traffic rerouting scheme on Shaw Boulevard beginning Thursday, June 1.

The rerouting, aimed at decongesting traffic in the area, will be monitored during the entire month of June, the city public information office said.

Posters will be put up to guide motorists on the changes.

One way traffic

From being two-way side streets, the following routes will soon have one-way traffic: Bernardo Street from Haig Street to Shaw Boulevard; Magalona Street from Shaw to Haig; Gomezville from Shaw to Guerrero Street; Luna Mencias going out to Shaw; Pilar Street from Shaw to Calderon Street;

Mabini Street from Shaw to San Juan; Ideal Street from Shaw to Lee Street; Laurel Street from Shaw to Lee; Lee Street from Laurel St. to Shaw; Old Wack Wack Road from Shaw and Sto. Cristo Street going to Shaw.

Motorists on the Pasig City-bound lane on Shaw Boulevard will no longer be allowed to turn left to the following streets: Bernardo, Luna Mencias, Lee, Cruz, Araullo, Gomezville, Torres, Calderon, Pilar, Mabini, Ideal and Laurel.

New rules

On the Kalentong-bound lane, there will be no right turns to the following streets: Lee, Luna Mencias and Bernardo.

Motorists cannot make a left turn to Laurel, E. Rodriguez, Bonifacio, Vicencio and Gonzales streets.

U-turns on Samat Street and on Sheridan-San Miguel Streets are also not allowed under the experimental rerouting scheme.

METROBRIEFS

Trader shot dead

TWO robbers shot to death jewelry store owner Virgilio Avecilla, 53, as he was about to enter his house in Mandaluyong City on board his grey Nissan X-trail the other night. They also took his bag which contained about P1 million worth of jewelry in addition to P150,000 in cash. PO3 Adonis Bacarra told the Inquirer that Avecilla refused to give his shoulder bag to the robbers who shot him twice in the chest. Bacarra said Avecilla had just come from their store in Barangay Kalentong and was already in front of his house on Oliveros Street in Barangay Barangka Itaas at about 5:45 p.m. Thursday. His eldest son was opening the gate when two men suddenly got off a red Honda motorcycle, ran to the parked X-trail, and aimed their handguns at Avecilla. When one of the robbers grabbed his bag, Avecilla pulled it away and the two robbers shot him in the chest. The robbers then took the bag, ran back to the motorcycle where another suspect was waiting, and escaped. Avecilla was already dead when he was brought to the Mandaluyong City Medical Center, Bacarra said.

Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

Request granted

A QUEZON City judge on Wednesday granted the request for preliminary injunction filed by a photo marketing firm to prevent a trading company from promoting and marketing a digital imaging technology in the Philippines. In a two-page order, Judge Ralph S. Lee of the QC Regional Trial Court Branch 83 approved the injunction filed by Photokina Marketing Corp. against Aperture Trading Corp. with office address at Room A, 5th floor, Prosperity Center Bldg. in Banawe, Quezon City. "Defendant and its agents and representatives are hereby en-

joined from promoting, marketing and selling Hi-Ti products in the Philippines," said Lee in his decision dated May 24. The judge also granted Photokina's petition to stop the trading company from "putting out any advertisement in any medium, whether print, radio or television, to promote and sell the products in the country." Photokina is the sole authorized distributor of Hi-Ti products in the country which includes multi-combination digital photo printers used for shooting and printing various sized pictures used for passports and identification cards.

Nancy C. Carvajal

'Pintahan at Musikahan'

ON May 27 and 28, establishments along Nicanor Garcia St., formerly Reposo, in Makati, will celebrate art and music, part of the series of activities to mark the city's foundation day. Thirty visual artists will paint a mural on the Parlane premises in Reposo while French films will be screened at the Alliance Française de Manille. An artists' activity tent will be set up where visitors can try their skills in painting and music and guests can have their portraits done by visual artists for a fee. A lecture series will be held this afternoon at the Ricco Renzo Gallery, LRI Business Plaza on 210 N. Garcia Street. Topics and speakers are "The Beautiful Trees Along Reposo St." with Dr. Ike Tolentino of UP Los Baños, and "The Reposo Area of Spanish Yesteryears" with Guillermo Gomez. Tomorrow, there will be more lectures, and an arts, crafts and food bazaar at the LRI Business Plaza. From 5:30 p.m. to 10 p.m., Lirio Salvador and Gilbert Sanchez will perform, along with the St. Scholastica Chamber Music Quartet, Coke Bolipata and his Camerata. The event is sponsored by Grupo Reposo.



SECURITY CHECK

National Capital Region Police Office chief Vidal Querol (center) and other police officials inspect different universities in Metro Manila, like the University of Santo Tomas in photo, to ensure the safety of students when classes resume next month.

REM ZAMORA

400 families homeless in Pasig fire

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

SOME 200 HOUSES MADE OF LIGHT MATERIALS were lost in a fire which hit Barangay Pinagbuhatan in Pasig City yesterday afternoon.

FOI Salvador Norberte said about 400 families lost their homes in the fire, the second to hit the crowded area on Caliwag Street, just behind the Mutya ng Pasig public market, in a span of about a year. Four people were reportedly injured in the blaze.

Norberte estimated the damages at P8 million.

City fire chief Ricardo Perdigon said the fire was electricity-related. "I heard some explosions, just like the sound of firecrackers. When I looked up, I saw the electrical wires beside my uncle's house already on fire," Ronald Goyon told the INQUIRER.

The fire began at 3:55 p.m., first razing the house owned by Goyon's uncle, Eliseo.

Firefighters managed to put out the fire a few minutes past six.

Ignacio Bunye's admirable traits

PRESS SECRETARY IGNACIO "TOTING" BUNYE's apology to Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel over a documentary portraying the senator as a destabilizer was not surprising.

The press secretary personally made the apology during a Senate hearing that he attended.

He said any bad impression about the senator as a result of the TV documentary was "unfortunate and unintentional." Pimentel, Bunye said, had always been "a fighter for democracy."

Bunye is a man in the truest sense of courage is a basis for manliness. It takes great courage to admit one's mistake. Toting Bunye apologizes for his mistakes.

Several months ago, the press secretary apologized to this columnist over a report that a well-known broadcaster was responsible for the release of a person charged with terrorism.

I cited President Macapagal-Arroyo as my source of the report. The President told me the information over lunch, citing military intelligence.

Bunye, apparently unaware of my luncheon meeting with his boss, denied that the story came from the President.

Toting immediately made a public apology to this writer apparently after being told about the lapse in communication at the Palace.

But the more admirable trait of Bunye is his sense of gratitude. During the same Senate hearing, Bunye mentioned Pimentel's role in making him what he is today.

"I would like to acknowledge that the good senator was instrumental in my appointment as officer in charge of Muntinlupa that launched my political career," Bunye told Pimentel, who lightened up when he heard the remark.

Pimentel was the local government secretary during the revolutionary government of President Aquino. He replaced incumbent mayors at the time with persons who were friends of the

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo



new administration.

People who express gratitude for a favor done to them are a rarity.

Even during the time of Jesus Christ, grateful people were rare. Of the 12 lepers Jesus healed, only one came back to thank him.

The release of five detained supporters of ousted President Joseph Estrada upon orders of Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez showed that the government's No. 1 lawyer is a thorough thinker, contrary to accusations by his critics.

The five were arrested by the military on rebellion charges.

The justice secretary said the charges against the five accused were at best "circumstantial" and not sufficient to stand in court.

"We (the government) are not always going for broke; we also go by the evidence," he said, indirectly berating the military.

If Gonzalez were a "yes" man as his critics claim, would he have ordered the release of the five who the military accuses of having plotted to kill his boss, President Macapagal-Arroyo, and himself?

The Bureau of Customs is being run by the courts, and not by Commissioner Napoleon Morales.

Morales, who had ordered a revamp of the bureau, has been stymied by temporary restraining orders filed by subordinates affected by his move.

Of what use is a chief who can't reassign his men?

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SATURDAY, MAY 27, 2006

Subtropic warming seen creating bigger deserts

WASHINGTON—EARTH'S atmosphere is warming faster over the subtropics than anywhere else, which could mean bigger deserts and more drought from Africa to Australia to the Middle East, researchers said on Thursday.

The fast-heating area girdles the globe at about 30 degrees north and south latitude, crossing the southern United States, southern China and north Africa in the Northern Hemisphere, and southern Australia, South Africa

and southern South America in the Southern Hemisphere.

Based on 25 years of satellite data, researchers at the University of Washington also determined that the jet streams—a pattern of westerly winds that help drive weather in both hemispheres—have shifted about 70 miles (112.7 km) toward their respective poles.

This is important because the jet streams mark the northern and southern boundaries of the tropic climate zones, said John

Wallace, an atmospheric scientist and coauthor of a research paper in this week's Science journal. The jet streams' shift toward the poles means the zones are expanding.

The research is not predictive, but does show a long-term trend, Wallace said by telephone.

"If (this jet-stream shift) is going to stop and it just ends up being 70 miles (112.7 km), that's not a big deal," he said. "But if it were to continue at the same rate over the next century, then that

would amount to a couple of hundred kilometers and that would start to have significant effects."

The dry subtropical climate regions, which contain some of the world's major deserts, could encroach into temperate regions, Wallace said. Areas such as the Mediterranean, southern Europe and the northern part of the Middle East could have a tendency toward more drought, Wallace said.

The same might happen in southern Australia and South Africa, he said.

The study does not address whether this warming is due to the greenhouse effect or some other factor. It is different from previous models, which saw the fastest warming in the tropics, rather than the subtropics.

The greenhouse effect is seen as a major cause for global warming, in which so-called greenhouse gases, especially carbon dioxide, swaddle the Earth like a blanket, keeping the sun's warmth.

Some greenhouse warming is

natural, but many scientists believe that accelerated warming over the last century was caused by human activities including coal-burning power plants and the use of other fossil fuels.

Faster subtropical warming in the lower atmosphere, which moves the jet streams, could push storm tracks toward the poles, possibly reducing winter precipitation in places like southern Europe, including the Alps, and southern Australia, the scientists said in a statement. **Reuters**

In Japan, ex-Livedoor execs admit to fraud

TOKYO—FORMER EXECUTIVES of the once high-flying Internet firm Livedoor admitted Friday to fraud allegations as they went on trial for a scandal that rocked Japan's financial and political circles.

The four executives, once known for their casual dress and brash ways, wore dark suits and looked humbly at the ground as prosecutors read charges of hiding financial losses.

"In principle, I acknowledge that the facts in the indictment are correct," Ryoji Miyauchi, Livedoor's 38-year-old former chief financial officer, told the Tokyo District Court.

"I am examining myself over the crime I have committed. I feel very sorry for causing trouble to many people," he said.

The three other executives—Fumito Kumagai, Fumito Okamoto and Osanari Nakamura—also admitted all or part of the charges. However, two accountants who are also on trial denied they cooked the books.

The former top executives are expected to allege wrongdoing by Livedoor's flamboyant founder, Takafumi Horie, whose trial is expected in July.

Horie, who less than a year ago ran for parliament with the blessing of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, has maintained his innocence.

The spiky-haired 33-year-old used to be a media darling for mounting aggressive, albeit unsuccessful, takeover bids and showing up at Japan's formal corporate board rooms in a T-shirt.

Prosecutors said the four executives on trial Friday "conspired" with Horie and falsely reported 5.03 billion yen (\$45 million) in pretax profit for the year to September 2004 to hide actual losses of some 300 million yen at the company. **AFP**



O JERUSALEM

Israelis dance with flags May 25 during the Jerusalem Day parade in downtown Jerusalem. More than 40,000 Israelis turned out to mark the 39th anniversary of the unification of Jerusalem, when Israel wrested east Jerusalem from Jordanian control during the Arab-Israeli war on June 7, 1967. **AFP**

Nepal king warned: Behave or you're dust

KATMANDU—HUMBLED KING Gyanendra must "behave" or he has no future even as a ceremonial monarch, Finance Minister Dr. Ram Sharan Mahat told AFP revealing a royal spending spree before absolute rule was brought to an end.

Gyanendra's conduct had been "very good" in the month since he relinquished his 14-month grip on power and watched as parliament slashed his powers, wiped the word "royal" from the nation's institutions and ended Nepal's status as the world's last Hindu kingdom.

Mahat has vowed to cut back on spiraling palace expenses that rose to more than \$10 million in the nine months before Gyanendra stepped aside following weeks of mass rebellion against his total rule.

That sum, when the king had to-

tal control over palace finances unregulated by politicians, was six times the total for all of 2001-02, according to central bank figures.

Premier Girija Prasad Koirala has met several times with Gyanendra since becoming head of an interim government but officials have given few details of their palace talks.

However, Nepali Congress colleague Mahat said Gyanendra should still be seen as a "unifying symbol" and the party would back him in a ceremonial role—but the issue had not been broached by the premier.

"They still have not talked about his future," Mahat said. "The prime minister obviously advised him to adjust himself to the new situation. He couldn't have said no. He had no choice."

Mahat said the monarch must accept a ceremonial role. **AFP**

WORLD BRIEFS

Probe expected to show Marines killed Iraqis

WASHINGTON—A military investigation into the deaths of two dozen Iraqis last November is expected to find that a small number of Marines in western Iraq carried out extensive, unprovoked killings of civilians, said congressional, military and Pentagon officials on Thursday. Two lawyers involved in discussions about individual Marines' defenses said they thought the investigation could result in charges of murder, a capital offense. That possibility and the emerging details of the killings have raised fears that the incident could be the gravest case involving misconduct by American ground forces in Iraq. Officials briefed on preliminary results of the inquiry said the civilians killed at Haditha, a lawless, insurgent-plagued city deep in Sunni-dominated Anbar Province, did not die from a makeshift bomb, as the military first reported, or in cross-fire between Marines and attackers, as was later announced. A separate inquiry has been started to find whether the events were deliberately covered up. Evidence indicates that the civilians were killed during a sustained sweep by a small group of Marines that lasted three to five hours and included shootings of five men standing near a taxi at a checkpoint and killings inside at least two homes that included women and children, officials said. **NYT**

Car bomb attack kills 8 in Baghdad

BAGHDAD—A car bomb exploded in an outdoor market Friday in eastern Baghdad, killing at least eight people and wounding 31, police said, as Iraq's new prime minister expressed hope two key security posts could be filled within days. The announcement came on Thursday, a day that saw 13 killings, including the deaths of two US soldiers who were killed by a roadside bomb in southern Baghdad. Violence resumed Friday when a car bomb exploded in an outdoor market in eastern Baghdad, killing at least eight people and wounding 31, hospital security official Sgt. Sabah Muhsin said. **AP**

Hun Sen bans 3G phones over porn fears

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia—Prime Minister Hun Sen on Friday banned video-capable mobile phones in Cambodia in a bid to curb the dissemination of pornography, heeding a request from his wife. Hun Sen, along with the wives of several other senior government officials, recently urged Hun Sen to prohibit the use of third-generation, or 3G, phones in the impoverished country because they can be used to spread obscene images. Phones with 3G technology can receive more digital information than their predecessors and offer features such as high-speed Internet access, high-quality video, and music services. In a petition addressed to Hun Sen dated May 19, Hun Sen argued that obscene images have "gravely negative consequences for social morality" and could increase the "sexual exploitation of women and children and other vices that would cast our society as a very dark one." **AP**

Theft of data on US veterans may cost \$500M

WASHINGTON—THE HEAD OF the US Department of Veterans Affairs faced angry lawmakers on Thursday and described how the theft of a device the size of an iPod containing personal data on 26.5 million veterans may cost taxpayers as much as \$500 million.

"As a veteran myself... I am mad as hell," Veterans Affairs Secretary

Jim Nicholson told the House Committee on Veterans Affairs.

Nicholson said a department employee who had taken the data home without authorization was placed on administrative leave and "other people are also in my sights as a result of this." The data was stolen from the employee's home in Maryland.

Nicholson said he could not promise the government would cover all potential losses by veterans, but suggested Congress pass a law to do so.

"There is no sign that any of this (stolen names, Social Security numbers and birth dates) is being used at this time," Nicholson said. Criminals can use such data in credit-card

fraud and other identity theft scams.

Asked how much it would cost to prevent and cover potential losses, Nicholson estimated "way north of \$100 million" and did not rule out a total cost as high as \$500 million.

Members of the panel, however, said they see the incident as part of broader administrative problems in the department. **Reuters**

Pope says Mass at Warsaw square

WARSAW, POLAND—POPE Benedict XVI celebrated Mass for an estimated 270,000 people Friday in a rain-drenched Warsaw square where his predecessor, John Paul II, inspired Poland's Solidarity movement against communist rule in a historic 1979 visit.

People lined the street to wave and cheer as Benedict's popemobile passed, and church bells pealed. An aide held an umbrella as Benedict ascended a high Mass platform topped by a 25-meter metal cross.

Spectators stood resolutely in ponchos and under umbrellas, filling vast Pilsudski Square before the 9:30 a.m. start, determined to see Benedict pay tribute to his friend and mentor—a main theme of his trip to Poland.

Aneta Owczarek, 18, dripping wet without a raincoat, said she wouldn't consider going inside.

"No way," she said. "This is one of the most important events that

could ever happen in Poland and we don't know if we'll ever see the Pope here again."

Boy Scouts distributed tarpaulins for rain cover, and people climbed on fences and sang along with the choir.

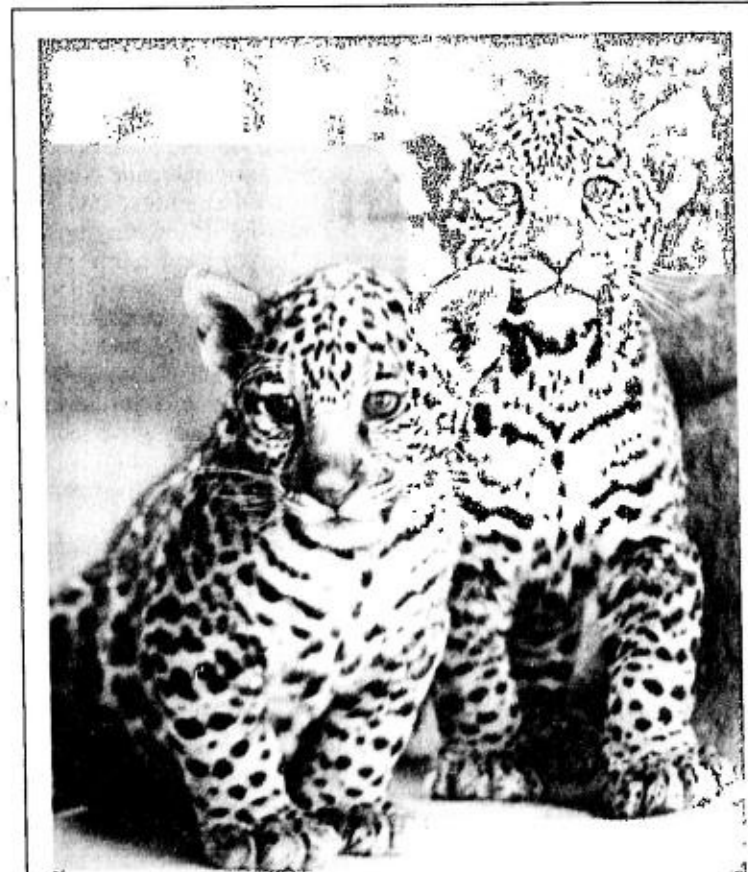
The choice of site for the Mass recalled John Paul II's bold call to "renew the face of this land" at the square, then called Victory Square, during his triumphant first visit to his native land after being elected Pope.

His appearance challenged the atheist communist authorities and is credited by Solidarity founder Lech Walesa with energizing the emerging trade union resistance to Soviet-backed communist rule, which collapsed in 1989-90.

The crowd was less than in 1979, when some 300,000 people jammed the square, with some 750,000 in the surrounding streets. Police spokesperson Pawel Biedziak provided Friday's crowd estimate. **AP**



POPE Benedict XVI at the Warsaw cathedral May 25. The Pope has urged Catholics in Poland to keep the memory of John Paul II alive. **REUTERS**



NICE TO HAVE AROUND THE HOUSE?

Two 9-week-old jaguar cubs look out from their exhibit at the Stone Zoo in Stoneham, Mass., May 25. **AP**

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

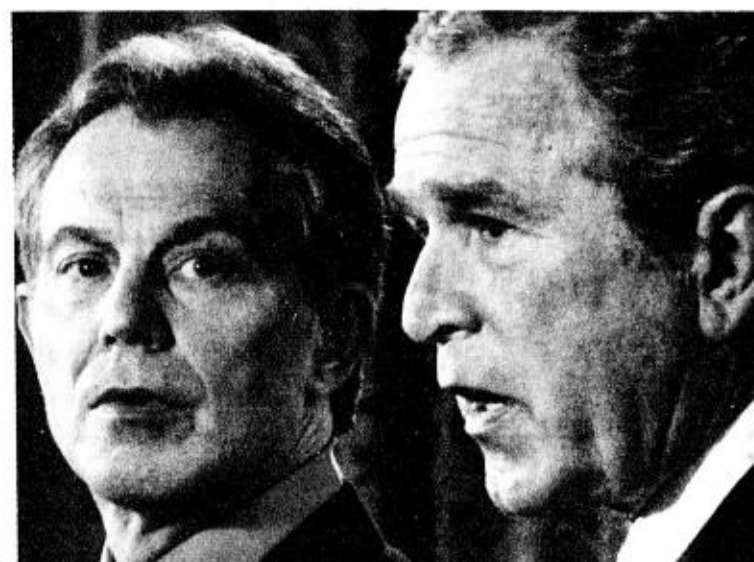
Bush, Blair acknowledge mistakes, defend Iraq war

WASHINGTON—US PRESIDENT George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair bluntly acknowledged that the Iraq war had been marked by "mistakes" and "missteps" but insisted that the world must support the new Baghdad government.

During an extraordinary 50-minute White House press conference Thursday, the political brothers-in-arms expressed distress at many aspects of the campaign which brought down Saddam Hussein but also undermined their own popularity.

Bush expressed regret for the Abu Ghraib prison scandal and some of his tough-talking comments.

Blair said the "de-Baathification" of Iraq—the clearing out of Saddam followers—had been badly handled.



BUSH and Blair (left) at the White House East Room press conference. AFP

There was none of the determined bravado that marked earlier press conferences after their regular meetings over the past three years.

"No question that the Iraq war has created a sense of consternation here in America," said Bush. "I mean, when you turn on your TV screens and see innocent people die day in and day out, it affects the mentality of our country."

"Not everything since liberation has turned out as the way we had expected or hoped. We've learned from our mistakes, adjusted our methods and have built on our successes," said the US president.

Bush said he should not have made gung-ho comments such as "bring 'em on" when referring to the insurgents in July 2003 as the attacks on US troops and Iraqi civilians mounted.

"I learned some lessons about expressing myself maybe in a little more sophisticated manner," he declared.

Both Bush and Blair have seen their public standings collapse over the past year, in large part because of the war, but both insist they were right to order the March 2003 invasion.

"The decision to remove Saddam Hussein from power was controversial. We did not find the weapons of mass destruction that we all believed were there, and that's raised questions about whether the sacrifice in Iraq has been worth it," Bush said.

"Despite setbacks and missteps, I strongly believe we did and are doing the right thing," he added.

Bush refused to set a timetable for the withdrawal of the 135,000 US troops in Iraq, insisting "we will keep the force level there necessary to win."

With a majority of US public opinion now against the war, Bush said, "It's important for the American people to know that politics isn't going to make the decision as to the size of our force level." AFP

It could be Blair's last visit to White House

By Jennifer Loven

WASHINGTON—THE BRITISH PRESS accompanying Prime Minister Tony Blair to the White House seemed to take it for granted that he isn't long for his world leader role. Only President George W. Bush protested—even Blair never bothered to correct them.

"Wait a minute," Bush said after a second question from the British side assumed Blair's departure as fact.

Blair's government has lurched from crisis to crisis in recent weeks, and his Labor Party suffered a severe setback in recent local elections. Blair has said he will not stand in the next general election slated for 2010, but members of his own party have called on him to issue a timetable for departing sooner.

Though Blair has not done so publicly, it was reported over the weekend in Britain that Blair has told ministers that he plans to leave office next summer. Blair's office has refused to confirm the arrangement.

One British reporter asked Blair cheekily if his talk about the necessity of vigorous leadership at the United Nations amounts to a job application. The British leader said it wasn't, but then expounded at length on the need for strong international institutions and used the nuclear standoff with Iran as an example.

Later in the hourlong news conference that alternated between questions from the US and British media, another member of Blair's press corps started with "Prime Minister, this is possibly your last official visit to Washington as prime minister." The reporter asked both leaders what they will miss about each other.

"I'll miss those red ties is what I'll miss," said the US president, looking at his colleague in blue shirt and red tie and then turning more serious about perhaps the most steadfast ally he has in the world.

"Don't count him out—let me tell it to you that way," Bush said. "I know a man of resolve and vision and courage, and I—my attitude is I want him to be here so long as I'm the president." AP

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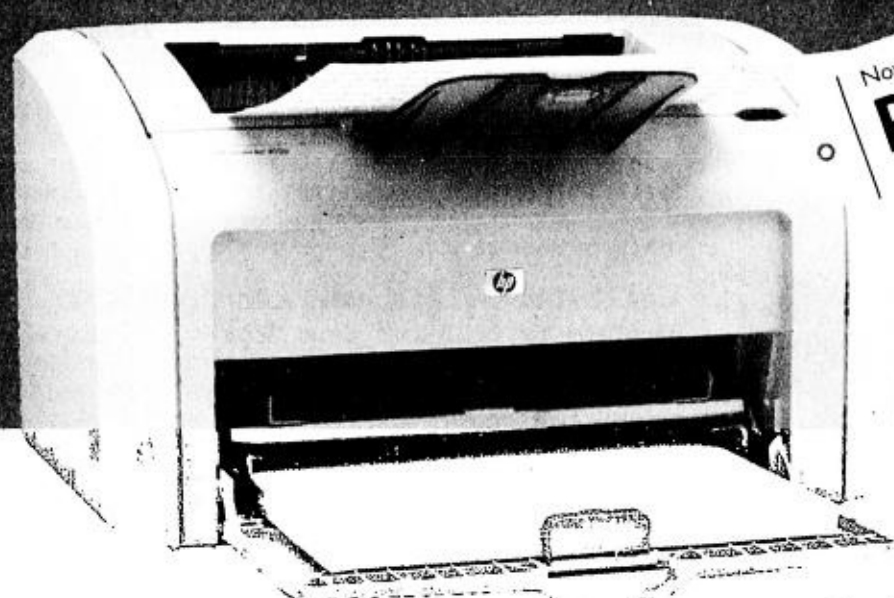
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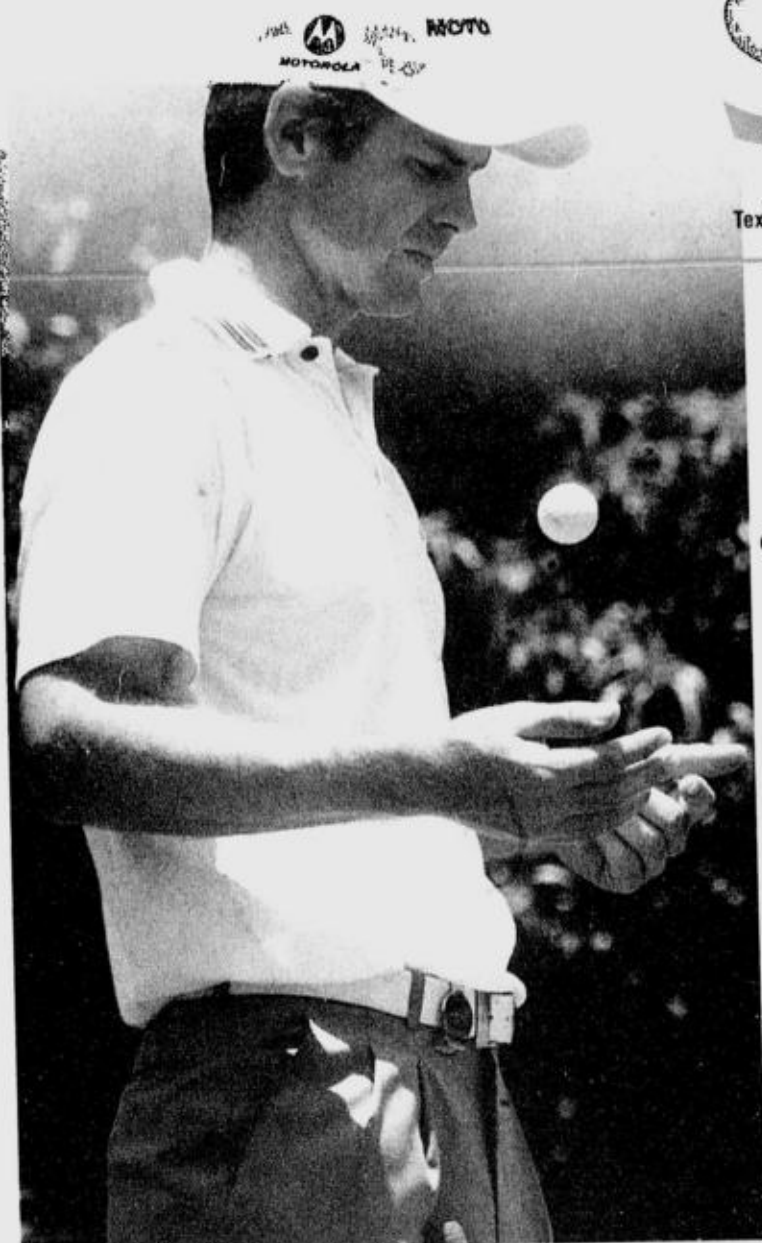


SPORTS

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SCOTT Strange takes a breather and plays with his golf ball while awaiting his turn to tee off at No. 9.

RUDY ESPERAS

RP OPEN

Juvic 4 behind leaders

Strange, Chang share halfway 1-stroke lead

By Musong R. Castillo

JUVIC PAGUNSAN MADE THE adjustments early Thursday evening, shook off the jitters yesterday, and for the third straight year made himself a hot contender in the Philippine Open.

Pagunsan assumed his place on the leaderboard as the top Filipino pro after a 2-under-par 70 gave him a share of fourth spot halfway through the \$200,000 Asian Tour event, just four shots off the lead jointly held by Australian Scott Strange and Taiwanese Chang Ting-yeh.

In only his second start as a pro in his native soil, Pagunsan mixed six birdies with four bogeys to join 2003 champ Rick Gibson (72) and Soe Kyaw Naing of Myanmar at 142.

"The bogeys I made were all because of bad luck," Pagunsan, the low amateur and a top 10 finisher in the last two years, told the INQUIRER in Filipino. "They were lip-outs, bad bounces, etc. With luck in the weekend, I'd say we have a pretty good chance at making a run at the title again."

The 28-year-old was one of 16 local bets who made it to weekend play as 30 of their countrymen fell short of the cut pegged at 150—six-over—including former winner Cassius Casas, whose second round 78 gave him a 157.

Strange, meanwhile, played steady for the second straight day and fired a 70. But he missed the solo lead with a bogey on the 18th after his grip slipped a little on his downswing in his approach.

His 138 total was matched later on by Yeh, the 1993 champion at Southwoods who fired a 69, which England's Chris Rodgers duplicated move up to solo third, one shot back at 139.

Yeh made up for an atrocious day off the tee by using just 24 putts, while Rodgers had six birdies against three bogeys.

Meanwhile, officials of the Asian Tour, the National Golf Association of the Philippines and Wack Wack president Ben Abalos yesterday announced an increase of \$300,000 in the prize money while making the event the Tour's kickoff leg starting next year.

Leandro Mendoza, president of the NGAP, and Louie Martin, the Asian Tour's executive director, also gave Abalos and Wack Wack hosting rights for the next two years.

Wei Lan-lu, another Taiwanese, fell from second to a tie for seventh along with four others after JUVIC/ A22

The second-round scores:

138—S. Strange (Aus) 68-70, Yeh CT (Tpe) 69-69; 139—C. Rodgers (Eng) 70-69; 142—J. Pagunsan 72-70, R. Gibson (Can) 70-72, S. K. Naling (Myn) 72-70; 143—A. R. Zahari (Mas) 73-70, U. Park (Aus) 72-71, M. Both (Aus) 73-70, Lu WL (Tpe) 69-74, G. Simpson (Aus) 71-72; 144—A. Kang (US) 72-72, R. Pactolerin 74-72, C. La'O 70-74, J. Knutson (US) 72-72, Hsieh CS (Tpe) 71-73; 145—L. Austin (Aus) 74-71, B. Iles (NZ) 76-69, G. Rosales 73-72, B. Hume (Sco) 69-76, A. Porker (Aus) 73-72, D. Singh (Ind) 75-70, J. dawes (Aus) 70-75, J. Delariarte 76-69; 146—Poh EW (Sin) 73-73, B. Saltus (US) 74-72, C. Warren (Aus) 73-73, S. Griffiths (Eng) 75-71, C. Harris (US) 74-72, SSP Chowrasia (Ind) 74-72, A. Que 71-75, Wang TC (Tpe) 74-72, R. Moir (Aus) 77-69, S. Nash (Aus) 69-77, G. Mann (Ind) 73-73; 147—M. Pucay 72-77, M. Keegan (Aus) 71-76, K. Chun (NZ) 70-77, Chen TC (Tpe) 74-73, H. Perks (Aus) 73-74, G. Rusnak (US) 73-74, M. Dumandan (a) 73-74; 148—E. Salvador 78-70, J. Bayron (a) 75-73, A. Murakami 71-77, A. Blyth (Aus) 71-77, R. Lee (NZ) 73-78, H. Kahlon (Ind) 75-73, J. Lupprian (Ger) 72-76, A. Presnell (Aus) 73-75.

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SPORTS

Laylo triumph seals draw with Lithuania

STANDINGS After Round 5

Men: 15.5-Russia, Armenia; 15-Netherlands; 14.5-Uzbekistan; 14-Sweden, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Iran, Belarus, Spain, United States; 13.5-China, Greece, Brazil, Germany, India; 13-Scotland, Georgia, Denmark, Croatia, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Romania, Israel, Iceland, Indonesia, Serbia & Montenegro; 12.5-Switzerland, Azerbaijan, Cuba, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Ireland, England, Peru, Argentina; 12-Paraguay, Turkey, FYROM, Slovenia, France, Portugal, Algeria, Vietnam, Norway; 11.5-Austria, Albania, Mexico, Moldova, Ecuador, Philippines, Italy, Lithuania.

Women: 12.5-Russia; 12-Ukraine; 11.5-Hungary; 11-Spain, Mongolia, United States, Romania, Armenia, India, Slovenia, Bulgaria; 10.5-Kazakhstan, Slovakia; 10-Lithuania, China, Poland, Georgia, France, Estonia 9.5-El Salvador, Latvia, Serbia & Montenegro, Vietnam; 9-Moldova, Israel, Greece, Netherlands, Croatia, Turkmenistan, Belarus; 8.5-England, Philippines, Venezuela, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Ecuador, Indonesia, Mexico

By Roy Luarca

TURIN, ITALY—IT WAS DARWIN LAYLO'S turn to shine in round 5 Thursday when he extracted the full point that enabled the Philippines to salvage a 2-2 tie with Lithuania in the 37th Chess Olympiad at the Olympic Village here.

Deftly handling black, the two-time national champion downed Fide Master Airdas Savickas in 64 moves of a Scandinavian defense to compensate for the loss of Grandmaster Mark Paragua on board 1.

The third draw against lower-ranked opponents pulled down the Filipinos to a share of 48th-56th places in the men's division

with 11.5 points.

The Filipinas, on the other hand, continued their seesaw campaign by besting Italy B, 2.5-0.5, and climbing to joint 34th-41st.

The 25-year-old Laylo, who hails from Lipa, Batangas, was two pawns up and threatening mate with his queen and king when Savickas finally resigned.

Grandmaster Eugene Torre failed to sustain his attack on GM Vidmantas Malisauskas and agreed to split the point after 40 moves of a Pirc defense on board 2.

It was the same case with GM Rogelio Antonio Jr., who was held to a draw by IM Darius Zagorskas in 28 moves of a Sicilian-Rosolimo variation.

Paragua blundered in the middle game, exchanging queens that enabled Rozentalis to seize momentum and gain center control. "I should have taken the knight with the bishop instead and I'd be OK," said Paragua, who had drawn his first three games.

Men's team captain Sammy Estimo said his wards have yet to find their rhythm.

"Those playing white should be able to deliver, but so far it's been the reverse," said Estimo, noting that FMs Oliver Dimakiling and Wesley So, both rookie Olympians, had also scored with black.

The Filipinos, bidding to improve on their 19th place finish in the 2004 Calvia Olympiad, try to get back on track when

they tangle with the Ecuadorians in round 6 on Saturday.

Woman National Masters Catherine Pereña and Sherly Cua delivered for the Philippines, hurdling Maria Teresa Arnetta and Veronika Goi, respectively.

Woman International Master Beverly Mendoza was held to a draw by Mariana Chierici as the Filipinas boosted their drive to improve on their 48th place finish in Calvia.

"So far so good," said women's team captain Cesar Caturia. "The girls are raring to fight it out."

They will again face a tougher foe in the Belarusians in round 6.

Pals defang Tigers, end long slump

GAME TOMORROW (Araneta Coliseum)
6 p.m.—Air21 vs Coca-Cola (playoff for last quarterfinal slot)

By June Navarro

ANTIPOLO CITY—MAC Cardona has the uncanny ability to strike when least expected.

Cardona sneaked in several momentum-shifting baskets to help Talk 'N Text subdue Coca-Cola, 83-71, and end the Phone Pals' six-game losing streak at the close of the Gran Matador-PBA Philippine Cup classification round last night at the Ynares Center.

While the win did nothing but boost the morale of the Phone Pals, the loss drove the Tigers into a playoff tomorrow with the Air21 Express for the third and last outright quarterfinal berth after both finished at 7-9.

The loser of the Tigers-Express game drops into the company of tailenders made

up of the Phone Pals, the Ginebra Kings and the Sta. Lucia Realtors. The four then go into a single round wildcard series with the survivor completing the quarterfinal cast.

Cardona, a rookie out of De La Salle University, finished with a game-high 20 points, including a signature one-hand floater that fueled a fiery close by the Phone Pals, who finished the classification round with a 6-10 slate.

"Even though we lost six straight games, the team has not lost its confidence," said Talk 'N Text coach Derrick Pumaren.

The top team after the wildcard phase advances to the best-of-five quarterfinal against the third-seeded Red Bull, which lost to Ginebra, 109-107, in the second game.

The scores:

First Game:

TALK 'N TEXT 83—Cardona 20, Carey 14, Alapag 13, Ritalulo 10, Taulava 9, Fran 5, Allado 5, Pablo 3, Washington 2, Julio 2.
COCA-COLA 71—Peek 11, Arigo 11, Singson 8, Antonio 8, Mamaril 7, Reavis 7, Miranda 6, Abarrientos 6, Francisco 6, Capali 1.

Quarters: 19-20, 41-35, 66-61, 83-71.

'Filipinos have what it takes to be in the NBA'

BEIJING, CHINA—Every year around this time, Adidas Philippines selects the two best players from the 15-year-old and under category of the three-on-three Streetball tournament to send to the Adidas Superstar Camp where they undergo training under world experts and get the chance to play two-on-two with NBA cagers.

This year, the anointed ones were 6-foot-5 Vince Fran of La Salle Greenhills, son of former PBA cager Raymond Fran, and 6-foot Kevin John Gamboa of Ateneo. The two left for Beijing this week to join 62 other players (aged 18 and below) from all over Asia, in the 5-day basketball camp.

Aside from honing their skills and learning something new, Vince and Kevin will aspire to make it to the All-Star team which will undergo further training in Atlanta, Georgia in July.

The All-Stars will be composed of 10 players culled from a group of 24 semi-finalists who participated in the Beijing camp. The Philippines' Ken Barracoso made it to this group two years ago in Shanghai.

Beth Celis

IN HUDDLE



DANNY Ildefonso (middle) of San Miguel finds himself too covered by the Air21 defense and tries to pass out to a waiting Dorian Peña Wednesday night. The Express defeated the Beermen, 110-98.

AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Sherwood Toyota, Montaña slight semis' picks golf tilt ends today

GAMES TODAY (Olivarez Sports Center)
2 p.m.—Montaña vs Harbour Centre
4 p.m.—Toyota Otis vs Rain or Shine

THREE CLUB CHAMPIONS BANNER a cast of at least 150 players seeing action in the fourth Sherwood Hills Invitational member-guest tournament of the Sherwood Hills Golf and Country Club in Gen. Trias, Cavite, which ends today.

Aggregate play will be the format on the final day after Friday's best ball competition at the popular Jack Nicklaus-designed course.

The shotgun tee-off is set at 8 a.m.

Club champions Yuichiro Nakanishi (Sherwood Hills), Shean Bedi (Camp John Hay) and Jingy Tuason (Sta. Elena) will try to carry their respective partners to the title.

Sherwood Hills chair of the board Bob Sobrepeña and Trece Martires City Mayor Jun Sagun hit the ceremonial balls.

They were joined by Sherwood house committee chair Ruben Payumo, sports and games chair Jimmy Borromeo and Sherwood Hills officer in charge Jayson Yu.

Major sponsors are Golfcorp, Club Leisure Management, Asia Pacific Golf Corp., Federal Management, Kork Inc., Corporate Air, Warbird, Information Professionals Inc., Isuzu, Mabuhay Golf and MRT. The minor sponsors are Camp John Hay Development, Camp John Hay Golf Club, Sports Specialist, Custom Clubmakers, Edlyn Enterprises, Citibank, Southwoods Manor and Wilson.

TOYOTA OTIS, THE REVELATION OF THE tournament, tries to sustain its inspired form against Rain or Shine at the start of their best-of-five semifinal series today in the PBL Unity Cup.

"They're in high spirits, they're well motivated," noted coach Leo Austria, whose Elasto Painters will be the slight underdogs against the Sparks in their 4 p.m. duel at the Olivarez Sports Center in Parañaque.

The Montaña Jewels, who clinched the

No. 2 semifinal seeding behind the Sparks, will also face the similarly inspired Harbour Centre Portmasters in the other semis showdown earlier at 2 p.m.

Barely making it to the quarterfinal playoffs, the Portmasters overcame Granny Goose's twice-to-beat advantage to complete the Final Four cast.

So expectedly, coach Jorge Gallent plans to stick to his game plan that turned the Portmasters into formidable contenders after a dismal start.

"We're doing very little adjustments for the game against Montaña," said Gallent. "They have deadly shooters, so we just have to stay in the game. If not, it will be

hard for us to beat Montaña."

Coach Nel Parado knows that the Jewels' elimination-round sweep of the Portmasters hardly matters since Joseph Yeo, LA Tenorio and Chico Lanete have been unstoppable for Harbour Centre recently.

Although the Jewels have been turning to Alex Compton for leadership, Montaña's strength lies in its balanced offense. In fact, none of the Montaña players averages in double figures this conference.

Fill-Am center Joe Devance will power Toyota Otis' bid to show its domination of the eliminations was no fluke.

Jasmine W. Payo

Guidicelli eyes 3rd kart win

CARMONA, CAVITE—MATTEO GUIDICELLI of Alessandra Racing guns for his third win in a row today when the 2006 Shell Helix-Cali Superkarting Series returns to its old home, the Carmona Circuit Philippines, today.

The 16-year-old Guidicelli is expected to be challenged anew by two equally strong contenders for the Karter of the Year award—Birel drivers Marlon Stockinger and Indy Villalon.

Villalon gave Guidicelli quite a fight in the last leg with Stockinger checking in a close third in the combined Formula 125 and Rotax Max Seniors race of this event sponsored by Pilipinas Shell Helix, San Miguel Corp., Denso Iridium Power, Honda Phils. Eastway Company, Aeromed Ambulance Transport and official tires Yokohama Kart Tires.

Also in the stellar cast are Jean Stefano

Marcelo of M&M Racing, Daniel Cleak of Bosch Intelco, Oliver Aquino and Allan Uy of Alessandra Racing, Marcel Thenu and the fast-rising Paolo Eslao.

The event will serve as tune-up for local karters competing in the second leg of the 2006 Asian Karting Open Championship which the Philippines will be hosting on June 9-11 also at the Carmona track.

Also favored in this series sanctioned by the Philippine International Karting Association (Pika) are Bobby Domingo, Vencer John Suba of JeT Racing and John Marcelo of Marcelo Racing.

Domingo seeks a repeat over Tiny Go of the Cebu Racing Group and Ysabel Potenciano of M&M Racing in the Rotax Max Novice class while Suba eyes another victory in the Formula SL division against Von Medrano and lady karter Samantha Santiago.

Spring-NBC trims Taiwan

HUA LIEN, Taiwan—The Spring Cooking Oil-NBC North Selection steadiest in the home-stretch to subdue Taiwan's SBL-Antelopes, 89-86, Thursday in the Hua Lien Probation Basketball Championship here. Magnus Membrere topscored with 25 points, including five triples, while Harold Sta. Cruz and Rodel Mallari combined for 23 rebounds to help Spring-NBC level its record at one-win and one-loss. The Filipinos, backed by Spring Cooking Oil, Tagaytay City Mayor Bambo Tolentino, Philippine Airlines, Laguna and Bacchus/Harbour Centre, dropped a 98-101 decision to Dacin SBL YMY in their debut Wednesday.

Juvic...

From page A21

ter a 74 for 143 even as 1991 winner Robert Pactolerin carded a 70 to tie Cookie La'O (74) in 12th spot at level 144.

Gerald Rosales, the second placer behind Aussie Adam Le Vesconte last year, matched par for 145, the same total posted by Jerome Delariarte, who fired a 69.

Marvin Dumandan fired a 74 and continued to lead the amateur race at 147. Jay Bayron stood a stroke back after a 73 for 148.

The other noted Filipino casualties were Rey Pagunsan (76-151), Tony Lascuna (75-153), Antolin Fernando (73-153), former amateur champ Jun Bernis (78-154), Carito Villaroman (79-163) and amateurs Tonlis Asistio (78-156), Matthew Manotoc (80-170) and John Policarpio (89-171).

Ardina coasts to Asia-Pacific victory

SINGAPORE—DOTTIE ARDINA STRUGGLED with a six-over-par 78 but still coasted to an 11-stroke victory in girls' 11-12 years division at the close of the Asia-Pacific golf championships at the Singapore Island Country Club course here.

Starting the day with a six-stroke lead, the 12-year-old Ardina steadily pulled away in the final round as her rivals from Thailand and Hong Kong got stymied by the very tough conditions of the SICC Island course.

Ardina wound up with a 226 aggregate, leaving behind Moria Jutanugam of Thailand, who ballooned to an 83 for 237, and Sharon Lee of Hong Kong, who scored an 80 for 238.

Ardina thus added an Asian trophy to her vast collection of victories that include a Junior World crown in 2002 and four straight diadems in the US Kids world championships.

Gerry Handog, the head of the Philippine delegation to this event, said Ardina

was just a class above the rest.

"From the start, we felt that Dottie will be very hard to beat. Her game has matured a lot ever since she became a world champion and this win will boost her confidence in the coming months of competitions in the United States," Handog said.

In Manila, Jungolf Foundation of the Philippines chair Amalia Montecillo and president Bang Mamaril also praised Ardina for again giving honor to the country.

From a field of 64 players, most of them giants, our very own duo of Kevin and Vince have caught the attention of veteran coach KC Jones, who admits he has "developed an eye for talent."

"Give these boys three to five years and they'll be a force to contend with," KC said.

Kevin and Vince played two-on-two with the two NBA cagers, the duo of Kevin and Dwight Howard versus Vince and TJ Ford.

Kevin and Dwight won.

ASIAN CLUB VOLLEYBALL

Japan whips RP belles

By Jasmine W. Payo

SCORING EASILY ON POWER-PACKED SPIKES, Japan pummeled the Philippines, 25-16, 25-15, 25-16, in the 2006 Asian Women's Club volleyball championship yesterday at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum.

Japan, represented by high school and college students from Hisamitsu Seiyaku, amassed 49 kills, while the Philippines could only muster 22.

"For this game, I told them we should not lose points, no misses," said Japanese coach Masayoshi Manabe through an interpreter. "We also played better in defense and we have the height advantage."

Mihoko Tsutsui delivered a match-best 12 kills and one ace to lead Japan to its first victory after bowing to Kazakhstan in the opener. Battered by Team Accel, the Philippines absorbed its second straight loss for a 1-2 record.

STANDINGS	W	L
China	3	0
C.-Taipei	2	1
Kazakhstan	1	1
Thailand	1	1
Japan	1	1
Philippines	1	2
Indonesia	0	3

GAMES TODAY

(Rizal Memorial Coliseum)

2 p.m.—Accel (Philippines) vs Rahat (Kazakhstan)

4 p.m.—Chung Shan (Chinese-Taipei) vs Sang Som (Thailand)

6 p.m.—Hisamitsu Seiyaku (Japan) vs Tianjin Bridgestone (China)

"When it comes to skills, we can do what they're doing," said Philippine mentor Constanse Reyes. "But they were more consistent and had better physical conditioning."

Earlier, Thailand also cruised to a straight-set victory over Indonesia 25-11, 25-18, 25-21, behind Wilavan Apinyapong's 10 kills.

Thailand joined Japan and Kazakhstan at 1-1, while Indonesia remained winless in three matches.

After getting pounded on the first two sets, seasoned spiker Cherry Rose Macatangay kept the Philippines within striking distance, 6-5, early in the third set.

Japan quickly responded, hammering down consecutive kills to take an 18-11 lead.

Macatangay had eight kills to pace the Philippine team.

In the nightcap, defending champion China downed Chinese-Taipei, 25-19, 25-21, 25-16, top grab the solo lead at 3-0.

Asuncions in semis

Keep RP badminton hopes up with win



KENNIE AND KENNEVIC ASUNCION DEMOLISHED their Indonesian counterparts yesterday to send the Philippines into the semifinals of the Bingo Bonanza Philippine Open badminton championships at the Philsports.

The sensational siblings thrilled an appreciative crowd as they drilled in a variety of shots en route to a 21-12, 21-19 victory over Puri Setyo and Lili Wang, thus providing a bright spot after the country's 24 other shuttlers had bowed out one after the other.

The Filipino pair enjoyed an advantage after having practiced with the Indonesians several times before the start of the tournament sponsored by JVC Phils., PLDT and Smart.

"We knew their game already and I think that helped a lot today because we were able to attack their weakness," said Kennevic, who had teamed up with Wang in the women's doubles. They lost last Thursday night to Malaysians Pei Tty Wong and Eei Hui Chin (21-9, 21-11).

The Filipinos, who have slipped to 69th from No. 22 in world rankings due to lack of foreign stints, will meet

tougher opponents today in Tri Kusharjanto and Minarti Timur also of Indonesia.

Kusharjanto and Timur, the Sydney Olympics silver medal winners, drubbed top seed Songpol Anukritayawan and Kunchala Vorawichitchaikul, 21-18, 21-18.

Still basking in their victory, Kennevic admitted that today's task will be doubly hard as they haven't yet played the vastly experienced Indonesian pair.

"They are a veteran pair, more experienced, but we will try our best and hopefully come up with another victory in front of our countrymen," said the 26-year-old Kennevic.

Also making the semifinals of the mixed doubles were Indonesians Muhamad Rizal and Gresya Poli, who fashioned out a 21-8, 21-9 over Vietnam's Thanh-Hai Tran and Nguyen Nhung le Ngoc, and Thais Sudket Prapakamol and Saralee Thongthongkam who bested Italy's Klaus Raffener and Agnese Allegrini, 21-7, 21-12.

Enduro Series first leg starts

THE FIRST LEG OF THE 2006 ENDURO SAN MIG Light Adventure Series kicks off in Cebu City today featuring competition in the novice category.

The race, a four to six hour quest, is open to beginners, students, yuppies and weekend warriors, who want to experience the thrill the event has to offer.

With more than P100,000 at stake, race director Neyney Guevarra promises a more challenging race in the event presented by San Mig Light.

Also to be given to winners are San Mig Light premium prizes and trophies. The event

is also supported by NS Royal Pension House Cebu, Converse, Rudy Project, Habagat, North Face and Bombproof.

A total of 100 racers are expected to take part in this annual adventure race that promises to get bigger and better in its third year.

The Enduro adventure series tests the endurance, wits and skills of the participants, who will face a lot of unexpected trials during the race.

The champion in the Novice category receives P15,000 while second placer will get P10,000.

KENNIE Asuncion (front) chases a shot near the net as brother and teammate Kennevic looks on.

AUGUST DELA CRUZ

SPORTSWATCH

Espiritu eyes CSI supremacy

VICTOR ESPIRITU SETS OUT AS THE MAN TO BEAT while San Leonardo tries to sustain its lead in team competition when the fifth leg of the Philamlife Cycling Search Invitational (CSI) Criterium Race is held today in Pampanga. Espiritu is 13 points ahead of San Leonardo's Bernard Luzon. The San Fernando race also serves as the final leg of the two-part, 10-stage circuit with the second half slated later this year, according to the organizing Treo Sales and Management Corp. The event is sponsored by Pagcor, PCSO, PLDT, Aktivade Thirst Quencher, Monterey, PhilCycling, Partas, Speed Detergent, Satellite Cable Max, Encash, the San Fernando local government, PSC, NU 107 and Yes FM.

Jr PBA: Caloocan triumphs

BATANG HARBOUR CENTER-CALOOCAN CONTINUED its impressive showing in the 2006 Burlington Batang PBA junior summer league, routing Batang Talk 'N Text Antipolo, 80-43, yesterday at the Ynares Center. Batang Harbour Center-Caloocan stayed unbeaten in four games to show the way in Group A. Batang Alaska-Paranaque trimmed Batang Purefoods Chunkee-Mandaluyong, 70-66, in Group A. In the day's other game, Batang PBA Greats clinched its first win in four starts by dumping Coca-Cola-Muntinlupa, 66-40.

Castillo seeks JVC semis

GELITA CASTILLO AND MALVINNE ANN ALCALA take on separate rivals today eyeing a title showdown in the girls' 14-under singles event of the JVC Open Junior Championships at SM Sta. Rosa in Laguna. Castillo overpowered Dorothy Griarte, 21-8, 21-2, to arrange a quarterfinal clash with Michelle Cruz, who beat Arabelle Lacorte of Sports Zone, 21-17, 21-9. Alcala, on the other hand, booted out Vika Dorado, 21-6, 21-11, to set up a duel with Krisnin Yang, who downed Tracy Alagao of Power and Speed, 21-15, 21-11. The tournament is sponsored by JVC (Phils.), Inc. and organized by IMG.

Big guests in chess finals

NATIONAL CHESS FEDERATION OF THE PHILIPPINES president Rep. Prospero Pichay and secretary-general Tagaytay Mayor Bambol Tolentino will be the guests of honor in the formal presentation of the 172 finalists taking part in the National Juniors and Age-Groups Grand Finals will be presented at 12 noon today at the St. Francis Square in Mandaluyong City. The finalists include seeded players led by national masters John Paul Gomez, Oliver Barboza and Julius Joseph de Ramos in the boys' division and WNMIs Eneerose Magno, Aices Salvador and Kimberly Cunanan.

Marlon Bernardino, contributor

Dela Cruz, Tan bag title

MOY DELA CRUZ OF GAMEFOWL BREEDERS Association of Negros, in partnership with Cesar Tan of Luzon Gamefowl Breeders Association emerged champions Thursday night in the NFGB National 8-bullstag derby at the Araneta Coliseum. Dela Cruz and Tan's Subok Lang entry scored eight victories to beat a field of 209. Jun Capill of Negros was runner-up finisher with 7.5 points. Supporters of the event were sponsors Purina Rooster Booster Gamebird Chows, Washout Shampoo by Lakpue, Strike Feeds by Asvet, Power Bullets, Amtyl by Excellence Gamefowl Specialists and Belamyl Vitamin Injection by VNJ Distributors.

Bigtime derby set at SJC

THE GENTLEMEN COCKERS ASSOCIATION OF the Philippines 5-cock derby unfolds at the San Juan Coliseum this Wednesday, May 31, with Sagupaan Complexor 3000 as sponsor. The event serves as the penultimate leg before the GCAP Cocker of the Year winner is finally known. Based on the latest standings, the top 10 contenders are Jun Topacio (JT Emerald, 26 points); Rep. Butch Pichay and Roy Briones (Spartan's Pichay, 25.5); Patrick Antonio (Sagupaan Complexor 3000, 25.5); ASF Group (JU AS WG Listana, 24.5); Gerry Ramos (Against All Odds, 24.5); Louie Cua (LCC Leonard, 24); Benjie Lim and Poi Estrellado (Papa Sta. Cruz, 21.5); Boy Royo (Makisig, 21.5); Manny Pacquiao and Antonio (Super Pacman, 19) and Jingco Brothers and Jet Fernando (Jlmaler, 18.5).

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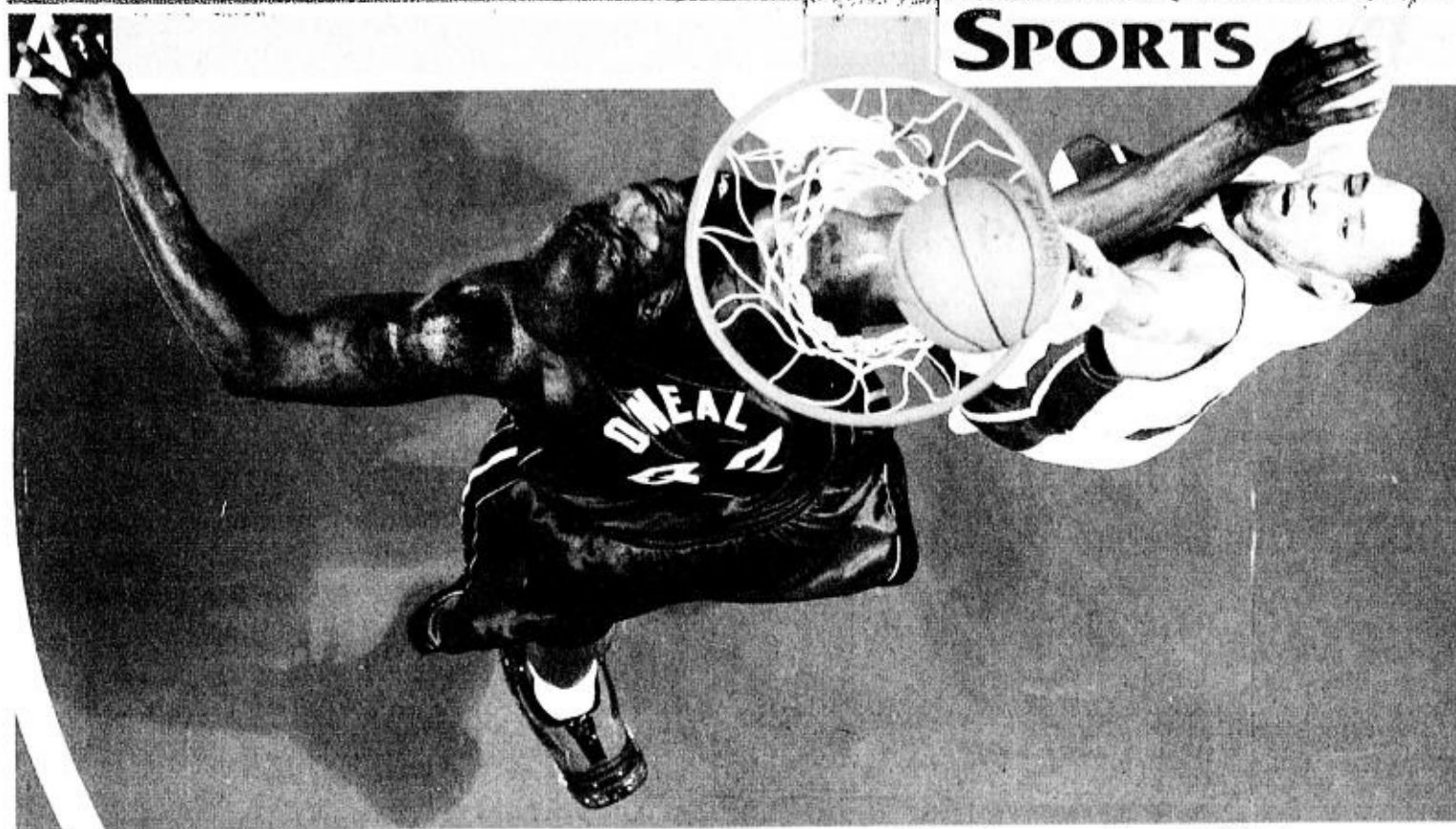
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DETROIT Pistons forward Tayshaun Prince (right) dunks the ball against the defense of Miami Heat center Shaquille O'Neal.

REUTERS

WORLD CUP

Casillas guards Spain's dreams

MADRID—RAUL WAS ONCE invariably the first name on Spain's team sheet but now his Real Madrid teammate Iker Casillas is the country's most influential player.

The goalkeeper has already had seven seasons in Real's first team and is preparing for his fourth major international tournament, even though he has only just turned 25.

He is practically the only top player at Real to have escaped criticism over the past three seasons and has, almost single-handedly, held the nine-times European champions together when they have threatened to collapse.

A product of the club's youth setup, Casillas burst into the Real first team in 1999 aged 18 after an injury to Bodo Illgner.

He was then given a fast-track promotion to the national side, earning a call-up for Euro 2000, although he did not win his first cap until a friendly with Sweden the next season.

Casillas was the hero of Real's European Cup win in 2002 when he came off the bench to produce three exceptional saves to preserve his side's 2-1 advantage over Bayer Leverkusen.

A few days later a freak accident to Valencia keeper Santiago



CASILLAS: Quick reflexes AFP

Canizares, who dropped an after-shave bottle on his foot, made Casillas Spain's first choice at the 2002 World Cup.

He kept the team alive in a penalty shoot-out win over Ireland but was unable to perform similar heroics against South Korea in the quarterfinals.

Casillas left the tournament as Spain's No. 1 keeper.

A genuine world-class player, he has a gift for spectacular reflex saves and a reputation for being almost impossible to beat in one-on-one situations.

Despite occasional lapses dealing with high balls, he remains Spain's most consistent performer and is the player most likely to make a difference if they progress beyond the group phase.

Reuters

Pistons avert collapse

Cool off Heat rally to square Eastern finals

AUBURN HILLS—THE DETROIT Pistons held off a furious late rally to edge the Miami Heat 92-88 in Game Two of the Eastern Conference finals on Thursday, tying up the best-of-seven series at 1-1.

After slumping to a surprise home loss in the series opener, the Pistons attacked early, finding center Ben Wallace cutting to the basket and building an 18-point lead by the third quarter.

But the Heat, led by guard Dwayne Wade, rallied with a blistering 17-point run in the final 90 seconds to cut the lead to just two points, stunning a sell-out Detroit crowd into silence.

Detroit guard Chauncey Billups struggled early but hit two crucial free throws in the final seconds before reserve guard Lindsey Hunter sealed the win with a steal from Wade at the three-point line as time ran out.

Tayshaun Prince carried the burden for Detroit with 10 fourth-quarter points while the rest of the Pistons offense sputtered.

Prince, who ended with a team-high 24 points, was called for a potentially devastating clock violation when he could not find an open player on an inbounds pass with less than 20 seconds left.

Prince said afterwards he had been trying to call timeout but was ignored by the referee.

"I was pretty upset about it, but things happen," Prince told reporters. "I just move on."

The broken play gave Miami the ball and set the stage for a running three-point shot by Wade that took the score to 90-88 and seemed to put a stunning comeback victory within reach.

Pistons coach Flip Saunders said his team was in danger of coasting its way to an upset loss as the clock ticked down.

"What happens so many times, you get near to the end of the game and you start playing not to lose instead of playing to win," he told reporters. "You wait for that clock to keep rolling

for the game to end."

Wade said the Heat would need the intensity they found in the final minutes of play to take Game Three.

"We've got to have that same want throughout the game," he said. "You can't do it against a Detroit team—dig yourself into a hole because this team will not beat themselves."

Miami center Shaquille O'Neal, who had 21 points, 12 rebounds and four blocked shots, also said the Heat came out too slow.

"We know that they're the best team in the East and we knew they were going to regroup and play," he said.

"We started to pick it up in the end and still had a couple chances to win, but we had too many turnovers and we were not playing smarter."

Pistons center Wallace, the heart of the Detroit defense, emerged as a surprise scoring option in the early going, with seven first-quarter points and nine for the game.

Reuters

● NBA on SOLAR SPORTS: Phoenix vs Dallas (8:30 a.m. live, 7 p.m. replay)

Tan Ho picks up 3rd straight title

THIRD SEED JASMINE TAN HO PICKED UP HER THIRD STRAIGHT TITLE after posting a 6-3, 6-3 victory over top seed Sharine Olivarez yesterday in the girls' 12-under finals of the 2006 Head Penn Junior Tennis Tour at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center. The boys' 12-under title went to Jacob Lagman, who scored a 6-0, 6-1 win over Juan Pocholo Macalino. In the boys' 18-under division, top seed Pablo Olivarez II downed No. 4 Russell Arcilla Jr., 6-2, 6-3, to advance in the finals against No. 2 Joshua Tan Ho, a 6-2, 2-6 (10-7) winner over No. 5 El Santo Santos. The Davao City-based Santos rallied past Akio Sy, 6-3, 7-6 (6), to reach the boys' 16-under finals against No. 3 John Francis Largo, who ousted No. 2 Mark Balce, 6-2, 6-4. Boys' 14-under top seed Kyle Cordero outclassed Jacob Lagman, 6-0, 6-3, to forge a title showdown with No. 4 Leander Lazaro, a 6-2, 6-4 winner over No. 2 Jose Lorenzo Ferrer, while No. 4 Ericka Lagura blasted Bruce Ivan Valenzuela, 6-0, 6-0, and unranked Jurenda Mendoza outplayed Mark Escames, 7-6 (1), 6-1, to advance in the unisex 10-under finals.

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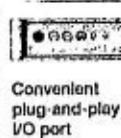
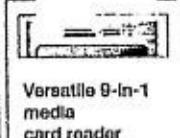
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Per DTI-PCR Permit no. 1234 Series of 2006

Editor Nestor U. Torre
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ISN'T IT ROMANTIC?

Sharon is fabulous at 40

By Rito P. Asilo

ONE NIGHT, DURING A LONG drive home from work, Sharon Cuneta's guitar-driven cover of Rupert Holmes' "Terminal" is playing on the car stereo, and we finally understand and empathize with the sentiment behind the sad love song.

Aided by Jonathan Ong's deceptively upbeat arrangement, Holmes' overused ditty—one of 16 songs featured in the Megastar's sleek new collection, "Isn't It Romantic?"—reeks with painful irony.

Romance

Suddenly, this "Terminal" is no longer the trite and soppy standard it's always been to us. And our heart goes out to the lonely career woman who is wistfully singing about finding romance at a bus terminal, and passing up on a love that might have been her escape from an empty, arid life.

Such is the power of Cuneta's storytelling gift. As a performer, Sharon's emotive ability is *nonpareil*, and her sincerity is beyond question. Whatever shortcoming she has in terms of range is conveniently masked by her unique ability to turn mush into musical magic.

Yes, the crystal-clear singing she so deftly demonstrated in her albums in the '80s like "Sixteen," "For Broken Hearts Only" and "Sharon and Love" may have slightly waned in recent years. But, as Sharon marks her 40th year, her sense of contentment, contemplative introspection and unconcealed *joie de vivre* have never been so noticeable. What better album to celebrate that milestone than "Isn't It Romantic?," which showcases the Megastar at her most vocally confident?

Strain

She only hits a snag when she pushes beyond her vocal capacity: In Stevie Wonder's "Until You Come Back to Me," for instance, the strain shows when she segues into jazzed-up vocal improvisations.

In hard-to-sing tunes like "Time Will Reveal" or "Turn This World Into a Land of Magic" (remade recently by Regine Velasquez as "Buhay ng Buhay Ko"), Cuneta has proven that she's no stranger to songs with various degrees of difficulty, and those that demand a wide range.

In recent years, however, Sharon has acquired a deeper voice that fits certain song types more than others. That, in itself, is not such a bad thing. In the year's most beautifully-packaged local album, she breathes life and meaning into old favorites.

Through Sharon's interpretive skill, Eric Carmen's "Isn't It Romantic?," Teri de Sario's "Sometimes a Love Goes Wrong," Randall's "It Takes a Man and a Woman," and the Bee Gees' "How Deep is Your Love?" are successfully rehashed into seemingly brand-new love songs.

If you miss listening to the Megastar's less popular but otherwise excellent jazz-tinged small gems like "It's Not You," "Lambing Ko Lang," "Make It Happen," "Both Sides Now," "Parang Baliw" or "Hanggang Saan, Hanggang Kailan?," shelling your hard-earned bucks for this slickly-produced album won't be for naught.

Lineup

Also included in the robust lineup are covers of "Simply Jesse," "Laughter in the Rain," "I Have to Say I Love You in a Song," "Heaven Knows," "Like a Lover," "Birthday Song," "With a Little Help from My Friends," a new version of Herb Alpert and Lani Hall's "I Don't Want You to Go," and James Taylor's "If I Keep My Heart Out of Sight," which she dedicates to her husband, Sen. Francis Pangilinan.

Sharon, however, saves the best for last: For the collection's final cut, she lovingly revisits one of the best songs of her sterling recording career—Odette Quesada's "To Love Again."

It would have been hard to measure up to

the touching naiveté, honesty and lyrical quality of the original version, but she manages to pull it off by delivering a more somber, less innocent rendering.

In the CD's extensive liner notes, Cuneta wears her heart on her sleeve. She shares: "I truly felt so different singing 'To Love Again' at 40 from when I first recorded it at 17... I cried so hard before I could record it again. I guess I've been missing my youth so much. I had no idea I was going to be so battle-scarred at age 40!"

Twenty eight years after recording her first single, "Tawag ng Pag-ibig," Sharon may indeed be

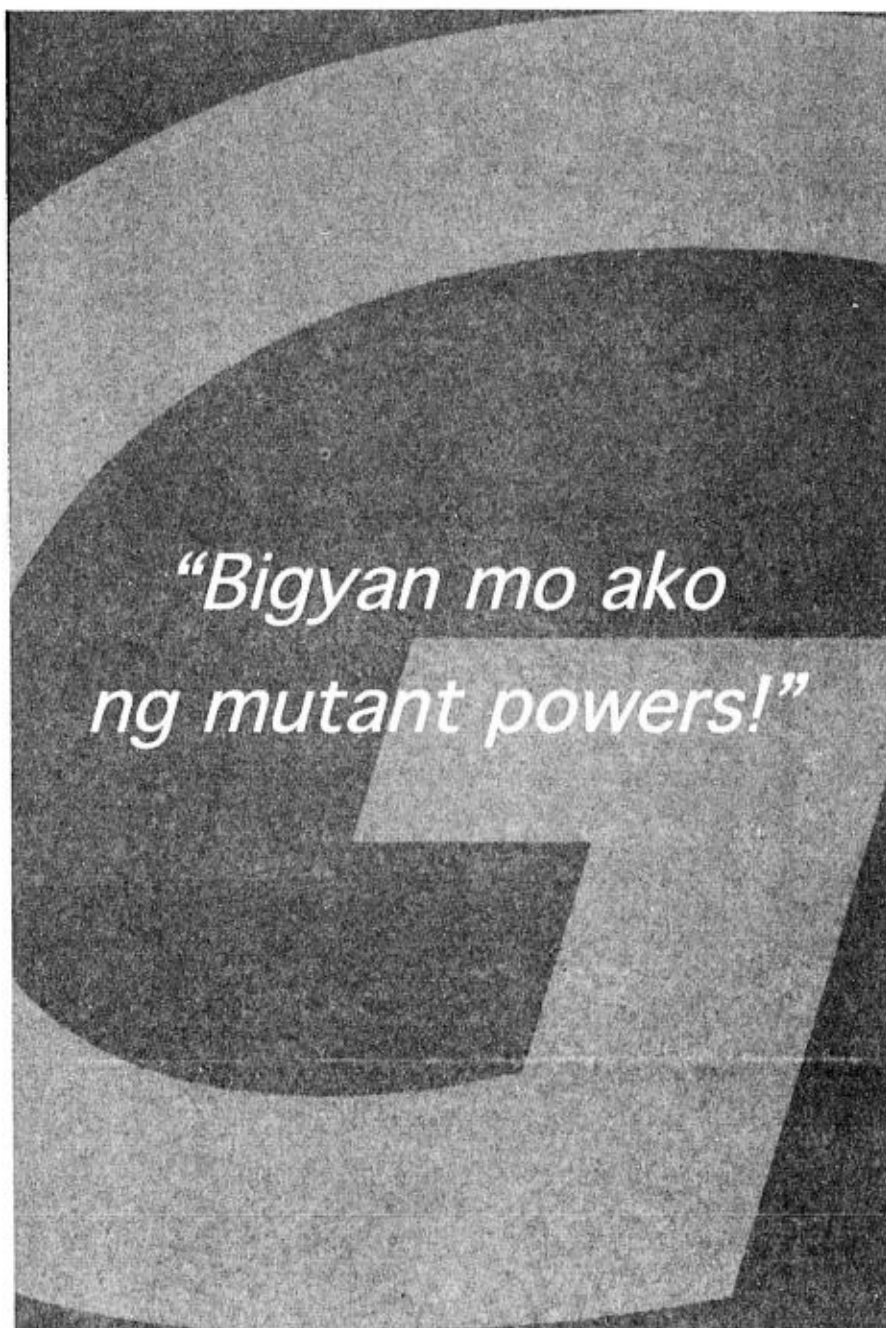
"battle-scarred," but her triumph over many odds continues to inspire people.

Profusely grateful

Sharon is profusely grateful for the blessings, and remains good-natured about everything—from a past failed marriage to her constant battle with the bulge. In the album, she thanks a friend (Peachy Mariano) "for reminding me I was once 'Darna'—and will always be inside!"



CUNETAS. Unique ability to turn mush into musical magic.



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HANKS. Insufficient personal investment.

The mouse that roared, the lion that squeaked

By Nestor U. Torre

SOME BOOKS MAKE GOOD movies, but others have a hard time transforming themselves into memorable films. Case in point: "The Da Vinci Code." It's ironic that, after all of the controversy and religious uncton that presaged its opening date, Ron Howard's film version of Dan Brown's best-selling book is still bogged down in—words.

Age and mystery

Not that director Howard doesn't work hard to come up with alternate-

ly beautiful and brooding images that give the production its appropriate patina of age and mystery.

However, these striking images eventually take the back seat to the film script's efforted attempt to make verbal sense of all of the new takes on the genuine wellsprings of Christianity that Brown and his school of thought represent.

The worst victim in the movie's cast in this regard is Audrey Tautou, the putative granddaughter of the man murdered at the movie's start—and the long-lost link to the speculative union between Jesus Christ and Mary Magdalene.

Despite her character's importance, Tautou is often reduced to asking a stultifying series of questions to be answered by other characters played by the film's other lead actors, about all of the "Gnostic" reinterpretations of early Church history.

Documentary

As such, she comes off more like an interviewer in a documentary than an actress in a religious dramatic-thriller. What a waste of talent.

At the same time, we must note that, for all of her charm, Tautou is too laid-back and even bland to make an inspiring presence when it's eventually revealed that she's the direct descendant of the Marovignian Jesus-Magdalene genetic line.

Tom Hanks also fails to pass muster as the film's lead actor, because his character, for all of his expertise, has little personal investment in the film's ongoing investigation and convoluted drama.

Compelling

The actor who turns in the most compelling performance is Ian McKellen as another expert who has much more at stake in the turgid plot's denouement.

Paul Bettany as the plot's most visible villain also comes on strong, but his performance is compromised by excessively obvious "evil" (perpetrated in the name of "good," it turns out).

It's also sadly predictable that most of the "conniving" clerics in the film are portrayed as "misguided" defenders of the faith who will stop at nothing, not even murder, to clamp down on the Jesus-Magdalene "secret" that could "expose" Christianity as a faith that's founded on a "lie."

Subjective

This subjective coloring and straining of church history's "factual" matrix betray the production's cynical motives, and lend credence to Christians' view that the book—and now the film—is an attack on some of the basic tenets of their faith.

After viewing Howard's film version, however, we can state that Christians have little to fear in this regard, because the production fails to "prove" its alternative view of Jesus Christ and the Church He founded.

Stating it does not make it so, particularly in the world of film, where statements have to be dramatically

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CHAOS

Flat characters bog down new 'Poseidon' remake

By Noelani Torre

SOME 30 YEARS AGO, there was this movie about a bunch of people trying to get out of a cruise ship that had been turned upside down by a 150-foot rogue wave.

Based on a book by Paul Gallico, "The Poseidon Adventure" turned out to be one of the first in a long line of what we now call disaster flicks, but it's certainly remained one of the most memorable.

Mystery

In fact, why anybody thought it needed to be remade at all is a mystery, but that's what they did. So now, we have our own 21st century, streamlined and CGI-enhanced version, "Poseidon."

Hollywood apparently has a thing for remakes, which is a bit odd since they often have iffy prospects, and it certainly doesn't help that "The Poseidon Adventure" is considered a classic. A campier sort of classic, to be sure, but a classic nonetheless—and one that had Gene Hackman all decked out in priestly vestments as the reluctant hero.

In director Wolfgang Petersen's "Poseidon," this role is given to Josh Lucas, who plays professional gambler Dylan Johns. No priestly vestments and Messianic tendencies there, and though they've tried to make him am-



RUSSELL AND LUCAS. Their characters' stories take a back seat to action and special effects.

bivalent about his heroic role as well, you'll only believe it for the first five minutes.

Not that strong characterizations are the point of this movie. In fact, they're hardly important at all. The real stars of this let's-get-out-of-this-sinking-ship adventure are the action and special effects.

Clocking in at less than 100 minutes, "Poseidon" has got to be one of the shortest feature films Petersen has made.

Appetite for gore

By focusing on the action and cutting out the characters' back stories and the conflicts between characters, Petersen is counting on the productions' fast pace and the audience's appetite for gore to keep us interested.

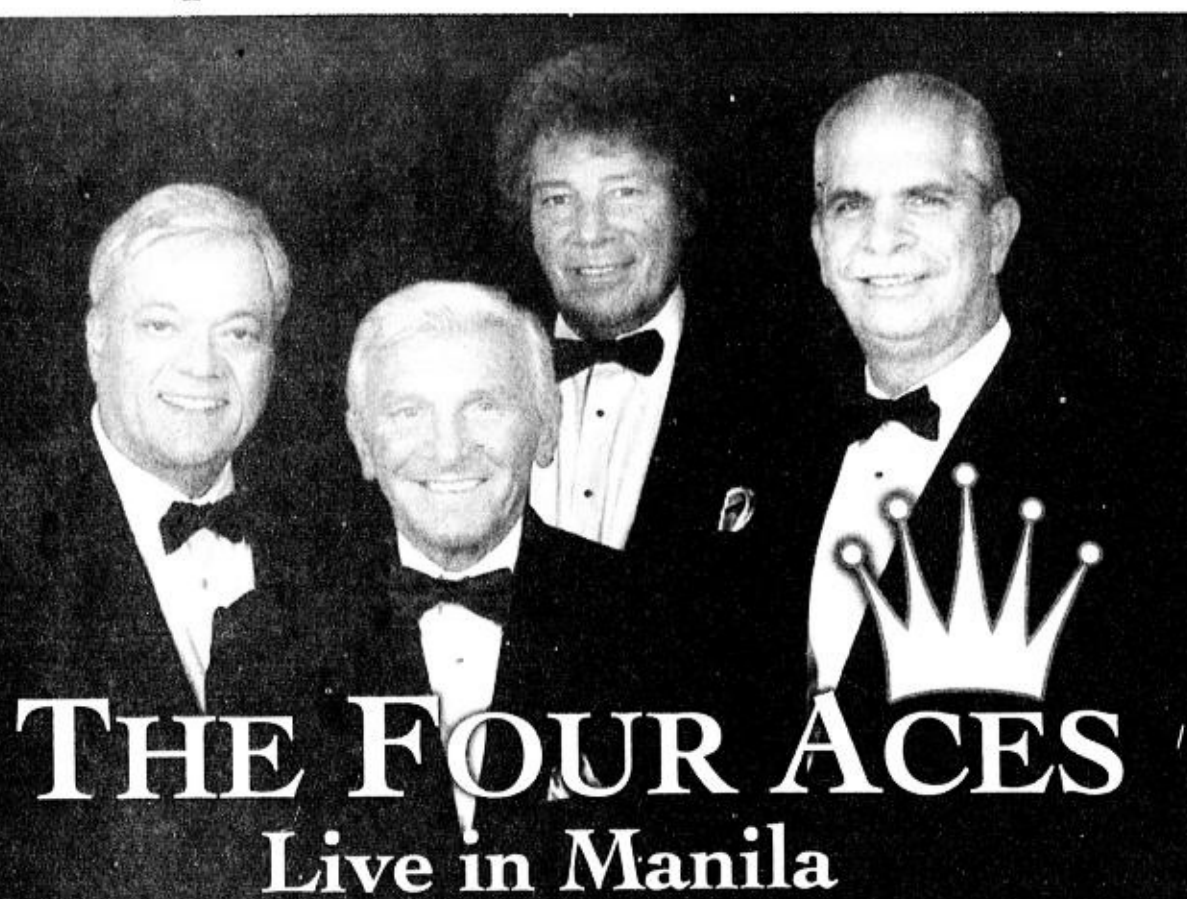
After all, people who watch

disaster movies view them for the disaster and not for good character development.

Disaster

It's not just one disaster, either—rogue waves are only the first of the potentially fatal problems facing the intrepid passengers (including a former mayor of New York City, played by Kurt Russell) who decide to find their way out. There are also flash fires, electrocution, heavy objects falling and, of course, water, water everywhere.

Petersen delivers on the action and the effects (though some of them look too much like CGIs), but they're not quite high-octane enough to make up for the movie script's banal lines and flat characters.



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The mouse that roared...

From page A2-2

"proven" to impinge on viewers' sensibilities and prompt an affirmative emotional response. This doesn't happen in the "Da Vinci" film, and that's both a pity

and a relief.

When Brown's book became a surprise best-seller, it presented itself as the publishing world's Mouse That Roared. Now that its long-awaited film version has hit the screen, however,

it has turned out to be The Lion That Squeaked.

Therein lies a cautionary, instructive tale for other filmmakers who think that all they need to come up with a good film is a best-selling book.



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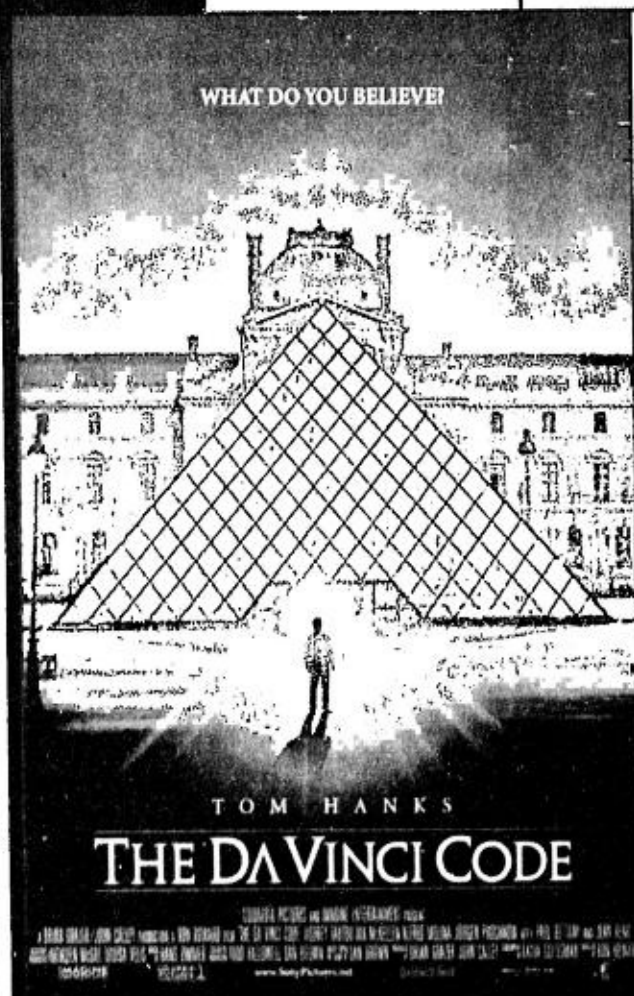
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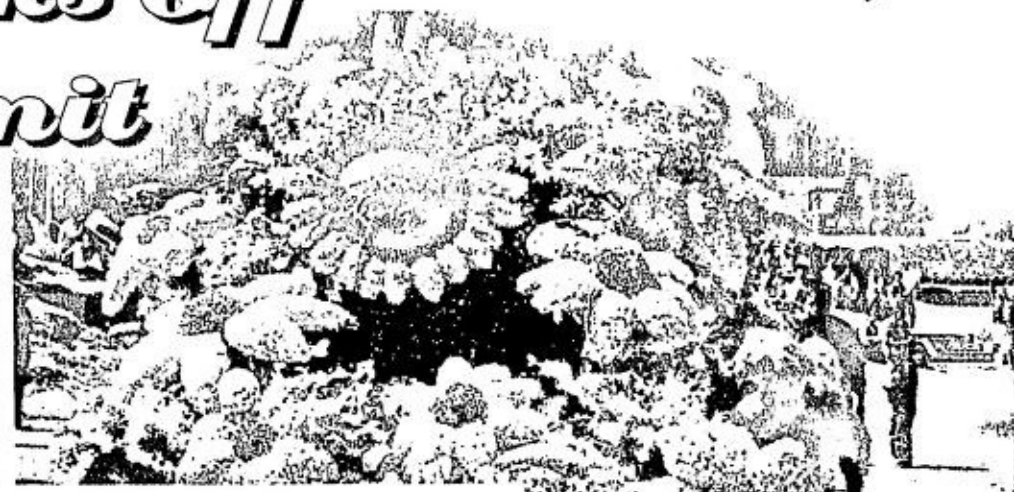
Fiesta

Mantawi Festival kicks off Asean Leaders Summit



Participants of Mandaue City's Mantawi Festival bring it on as the people dance to the unique beat of this yearly festival that commemorates the culture and history of this historic place where 482 years ago, the Spanish Galleon Trade began. The event also kicks off the build-up to the coming Asean

Leaders Summit to be held in December at the P750-million Cebu International Convention Center (CICC) being built at the new Mandaue South Reclamation Area, a new 198-hectare commercial area designated to be the new heart of the City of Mandaue. Shown is the Surigao contingent.



CHOWKING FLORAL FLOAT WINS PENABENGA 2006 HALL OF FAME

Chowking won the Best Floral Float award (Hall of Fame) in the recently concluded 2006 Penabenga Flower Festival in Baguio City. This year's float themed 'The Family in Harmony with Nature' is the third year in a row that Chowking came out the judges' favorite in terms of symbolisms and visual creativity. Despite the win, the company still intends to participate in the annual event in the non-competing category in the coming years.

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SATURDAY Special

Why Taylor Hicks is 2006's American Idol

By Nestor U. Torre

LAST THURSDAY, THE HUGELY POPULAR "American Idol" singing tilt finally announced this year's winner—Taylor Hicks. The prematurely grey-haired unknown got a clear majority of the record-setting 63.4 million votes cast in the grand finals, enabling him to trounce the also gifted and charismatic Katharine McPhee.

Instructive tale

Katharine is a great combination of talent and beauty, so why did more viewer-voters dote on Taylor, the Hick? Therein lies a pop-instructive tale:

When Taylor first auditioned for "American Idol," judges Randy Jackson and Paula Abdul found him refreshingly original and feisty, but the chronically ornery Simon Cowell predicted that he wouldn't survive the next round.

But, wonder of wonders, Taylor *did* survive. More than that, he was soon attracting a lot of fans who liked his "soulful" approach to performance, and promptly billed themselves as his Soul Patrol.

In time, even the haughty Simon would apologize for his scathing disdain for Taylor, and even cited him as one of his top three bets to win the tilt.

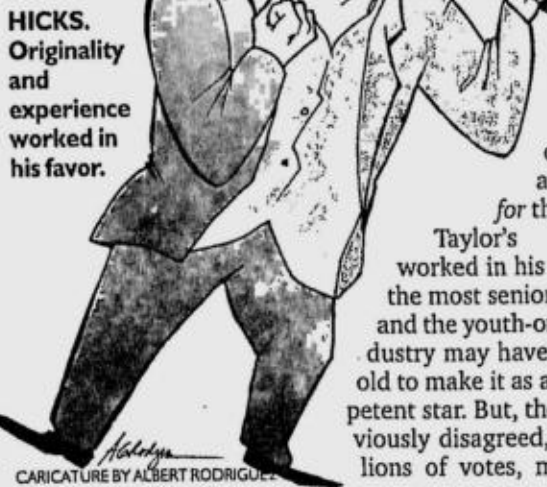
For her part, Katharine was also bowling them over, but in a quieter and more gradual way. To be sure, she occasionally came across as nervous and insecure, but there was something "stellar" about her that started to excite viewers, especially after astute packaging enhanced her beauty and appeal, complementing her exceptional singing voice.

In time, Taylor and Katharine emerged as a study in instructive contrasts: He was a down-home original, she was a star in the making; he was all heart and energy, she was the epitome of cool and sophistication.

Idiosyncratic

By rights, the new American Idol should be a star, so that would tip the tilt in favor of

HICKS. Originality and experience worked in his favor.



CARICATURE BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Katharine. But, idiosyncratic Taylor excited viewers more, possibly because they could relate to him, and felt that he sang for them.

Taylor's experience also worked in his favor. At 29, he was the most senior singer in the finals, and the youth-oriented recording industry may have considered him too old to make it as a recording and competent star. But, the show's viewers obviously disagreed, and with their millions of votes, made him their star,

their way.

It was their way of reminding record and concert producers that "manufactured" and "prepackaged" stars are OK, but the talents who really excite the viewing and listening public are those who effect a personal connection with their audience, a "key connect" that makes factors like looks and age irrelevant.

Votes

The huge number of votes cast in this year's grand finals indicates that Taylor and Katharine's respective armies of fans went all-out to support them. The fact that Taylor won proves that more people voted from the heart, from America's Heartland. And that's uniquely right, because Taylor Hicks is—all heart!



NOW SHOWING

'X-Men' franchise in crackling finale

By Rito P. Asilo

'X-Men: The Last Stand'

D: Brett Ratner
S: Hugh Jackman, Halle Berry, Ian McKellen, Patrick Stewart, Famke Janssen

ARE YOU WILLING TO change who you are to find acceptance? In Brett Ratner's crackling, fast-paced adaptation of the X-Men's "Dark Phoenix" saga, when a "cure" for mutancy is discovered, mutants from all over the world are confronted with issues of identity, racial diversity, alienation and lust for power.

For the first time, Eric Lehnsherr aka Magneto (Ian McKellen) and Charles Xavier's (Patrick Stewart) genetically-gifted followers are given a choice: To retain the uniqueness that isolates and alienates them or give up their powers to fit into a world that fears and despises them.

Billionaire industrialist Warren Worthington II (Michael Murphy), father of the 16-foot-winged Angel (Ben Foster), spearheads the development of the "cure" for mutants like his son when he finds Jimmy aka Leech (Cameron Bright), the young source of the antidote. But, the drug can only be generated—and replicated—from the boy, whom Magneto sees as a threat to earth's mutant population.

Together with his group, the Brotherhood of Mutants, Magneto recruits the confused Jean Grey (Famke Janssen), who is "resurrected" after sacrificing her life to save her teammates in "X-Men 2," to get rid of Jimmy.

Now in full control of her telekinetic and telepathic powers, Jean emerges as the most powerful mutant there is—even mightier than Professor X and Magneto combined!

But, does Jean allow her tremendous powers to control her? As the comic-book adage repeatedly cautions: With great power comes great responsibility—and sometimes, it's easy to get overwhelmed by it.

On surface, the moral conflict the film presents is a classic comic-book case, but the existential issues that this particular storyline treads aren't really so different from those that besiege the social and political landscape of the current world order.

On point of action and entertainment, Brett Ratner delivers. Although not as cerebral nor as smooth as Bryan Singer (who left Marvel's lucrative movie franchise to do "Superman Returns," which had to recruit another director when Ratner quit the project), Ratner pulls no punches—from the jaw-dropping special effects (see the Golden Gate bridge fly, etc.) to the countless eardrum-pounding explosions.

Ratner even manages to execute some affecting dramatic scenes between Wolverine, Cyclops (James Marsden) and Jean Grey. Similarly, the death scenes are nothing to scoff at.

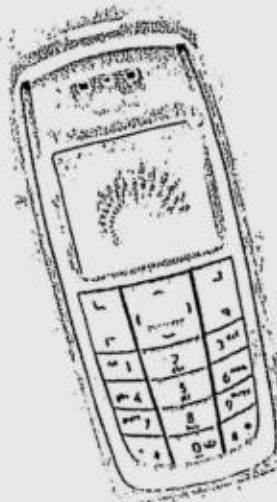
The movie's special effects aren't as polished, and some lines are hokey and cliché-ridden—as if the writers lifted lines from a

'X-MEN/A3-3

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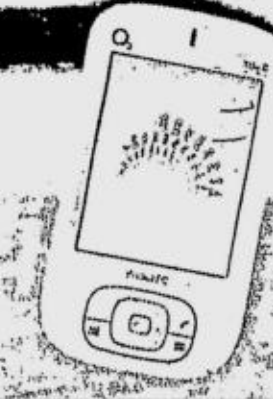
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X-MEN: THE LAST STAND PG13 12:00, 2:20, 4:40, 7:00, 9:20	THE DA VINCI CODE R18 12:15, 3:15, 6:15, 9:15	X-MEN: THE LAST STAND PG13 1:10, 3:30, 5:50, 10:30

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THIS JUNE, THE hallmark Channel presents "Murder 19C: Detective Murdoch Mysteries." Based on a bestselling Canadian novel, the presentation's three exhilarating stories are set in 1886.

MONTAGE

They revolve around a principled young detective (Peter Outerbridge) who uses his innate ability to sift through a mountain of data to solve a number of cruel murders. Coroner



OUTERBRIDGE (WITH FLORA MONTGOMERY, LEFT). Topbill "Detective Murdoch Mysteries."

Julia Ogden (Keeley Hawes) helps him piece the evidence together and come up with the killer's identity.

Solace

The Solace band performs cuts from its "Never Easy" debut album on June 2 at SM Megamall, June 3 at SM Bicutan, June 16 at SM Molino, June 23 at SM Fairview, June 25 at SM City Clark, and June 30 at SM North Edsa. The carrier single, "Never Easy," is currently getting good radio airplay.

Hot new video

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'X-Men: The Last Stand'

"Opening Night" on Star Movies tomorrow at 1:25 p.m. presents exclusive scenes from "X-Men: The Last Stand," directed by Brett Ratner and starring Patrick Stewart, Kelsey Grammer, Hugh Jackman, Ian McKellen and Halle Berry. Also on Star Movies: Tomorrow at 1:55 p.m., "The Man with the Golden Gun" with Roger Moore as James Bond. And on May 29 at 10:35 p.m., "Urban Legends: The Final Cut."

'Benchwarmers'

On May 29, "The Benchwarmers" premieres at Glorietta 4, in cooperation with Jack TV. Producer Adam Sandler's comedy is about three losers (Rob Schneider, David Spade and Jon Heder) who form a three-man baseball team to challenge a full squad of elementary school bullies.

Movies on TV

On HBO, May 27 at 1:15 p.m., "12 Monkeys." May 28 at 8 p.m., "Shark Tale." May 29 at 8:15 a.m., "Harry's War." May 30 at 7:45 a.m., "The Sea Wolves." May 31 at 11:30 a.m., "Exorcist: The Beginning." On Cinemax, May 27 at 9:20 a.m., "Missing in Action." May 28 at 1 p.m., "Pleasantville." May 29 at 8 p.m., "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind." May 30 at 9 a.m., "Single White Female." May 31 at 6:15 p.m., "Fool for Love."

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Filipino movies feted in Shanghai

By Behn Cervantes

I WAS EAGER TO ATTEND Shanghai's First Filipino Film Festival in the Chinese city once referred to as the Paris of the East. I flew to China with Angelo Castro Jr., Maryo de los Reyes, Mark Gil and Elvert Banares.

Our group arrived one day before "Magnifico" opened the filmfest at the Cathay Theater. Maryo and Mark were justifiably proud of their fine little film that has garnered 36 awards in international film festivals.

Selection

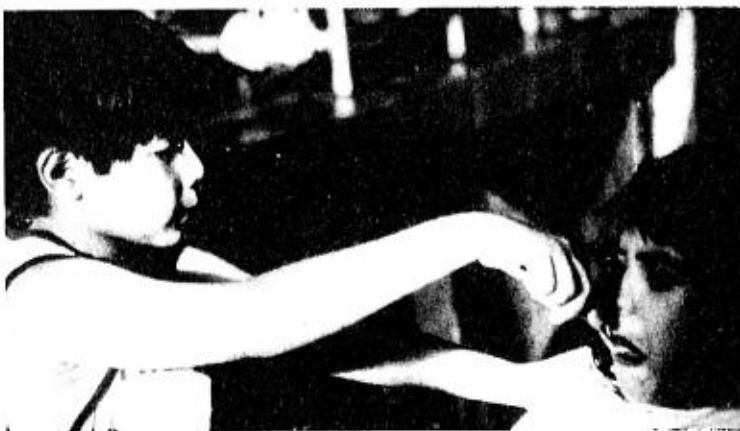
Aside from "Magnifico," the selection included Laurice Guillen's "Tanging Yaman," Aureas Solito's "Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros," Mark Meily's "Crying Ladies," Jeffrey Jeturian's "Minsan Pa" and Olivia Lamasan's "Milan."

On opening night, the festival drew a sizable crowd. Naturally, we felt proud that the movie was appreciated for its message, acting and direction. The theme of good winning over evil touched viewers.

The success of "Magnifico" and other recent "little" films hints at the future of Philippine cinema. These independent films concentrate on theme and story rather than star appeal and bongga elements.

Contemporary

Philippine Consul-General Jesus I. Yabes expressed hope that "the Chinese people will learn more about our country through contemporary Filipino films." Zhou Muyao, presi-



dent of Shanghai People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, lauded the festival for highlighting the "traditional friendship between our people that goes back to ancient times."

Ambeth Ocampo, chairman of the NCCA, shared that he expected the festival to strengthen ties between the two nations.

I asked Maryo how he thought the festival fared as a cultural event. He shared: "The organizers should have maximized our presence by facilitating more exchanges of ideas between the Chinese audience and the Filipino artists."

Discussions

Since our film artists had already taken time out from their busy schedules, the festival organizers could have set up more discussions between Chinese students and our film people.

Maryo and Mark could have discussed current trends on contemporary Philippine cinema, resulting in a substantive understanding of Filipino filmmaking.

"MAGNIFICO."

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'Pintahan at Musikahan'

TODAY AND TOMORROW, ESTABLISHMENTS along Nicanor Garcia st. (formerly Reposo), will gather to celebrate art and music through "Pintahan at Musikahan sa Reposo." This is the second year Grupo Reposo is joining the festivities.

Thirty visual artists will paint a mural on the wall along the Parlance premises of Reposo. French films will be screened at the Alliance Francaise de Manille.

Visitors

An Artists' Activity Tent will be put up for visitors who wish to try their skills in painting and music. Guests can have their portraits done by visual artists.

There will also be a series of lectures at the Ricco Renzo Gallery of LRI Business Plaza. Dr. Ike Tolentino will talk about "The Beautiful Trees Along Reposo St." from 3 to 4 p.m., while Guillermo Gomez will discuss "The Reposo Area of Spanish Yesteryears"

STREET SMART



Mandy Navasero

from 4 to 5 p.m.

From 5:30 to 10 p.m., a musical production will feature the Chakra group, the University of Makati Chorale, the Makiling Ensemble, and the Philippine Youth Symphonic Band.

Performers

On May 28, from 5:30 to 10 p.m., performers include Lirio Salvador, Gilbert Sanchez, the St. Scholastica Chamber Music Quartet, Coke Bolipata and his group, Camerata.

E-mail mandynavasero@yahoo.com, or call 899-1767.

Art, music at Pundaquit fest

CASA SAN MIGUEL FOUNDATION in San Antonio, Zambales concludes the 13th Season of the Pundaquit Festival with a day-long festivity featuring visual arts, dance and chamber music today.

Concert

The event kicks off with a dance concert featuring renowned dance artist Myra Beltran and her group, Dance Forum, interpreting a contemporary work titled "Order for Masks."

A memorial mass and concert will be held in observance of the first death anniversary of Ricardo K. Bolipata, patriarch of the Boli-

pata family of artists.

The Pundaquit Virtuosi, the resident children's string ensemble of Casa San Miguel, will play classical chamber compositions like Mendelssohn's Octet, along with selections from Tony Bennett and other crooners of the '60s.

Residency

Finally, young sculptor Jan Leeroy New is also mounting his first solo installation show, "Myself as Adam After the Big Bang," at the Siemens Hall as culmination of his residency at Casa San Miguel.

Call 903-8657 or text 0920-9610320.

'X-Men' franchise . . . From page A3-1

book of quotations and asked the actors to deliver them earnestly.

Bad lines notwithstanding, the movie nevertheless finds its heart in the involved performances of its actors.

Jackman, for one, shows the inner turmoil of Wolverine when his character has to choose between love and duty. He is stripped of his indifference when beloved friends and colleagues give up their lives for their cause.

Also, the intimate sketches about the personal lives of mutant characters show a touching montage of suppressed sadness and a sense of alienation as results of discrimination.

The demons that haunt these mutants—whether good or bad—are daunting "issues" that also mirror our fears as human beings, as we continually search for acceptance and understanding in the world we live in.

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1985

1995

1996

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1998

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PAGE ONE

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HUGH JACKMAN HALLE BERRY

X-MEN

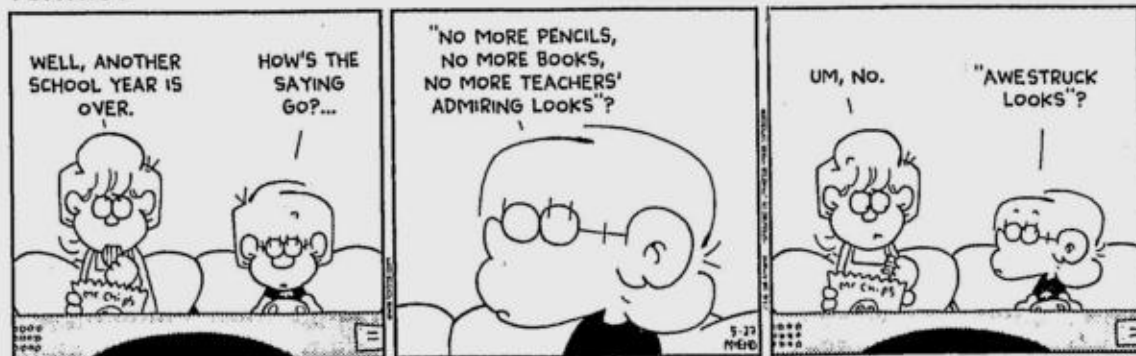
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MARVIN



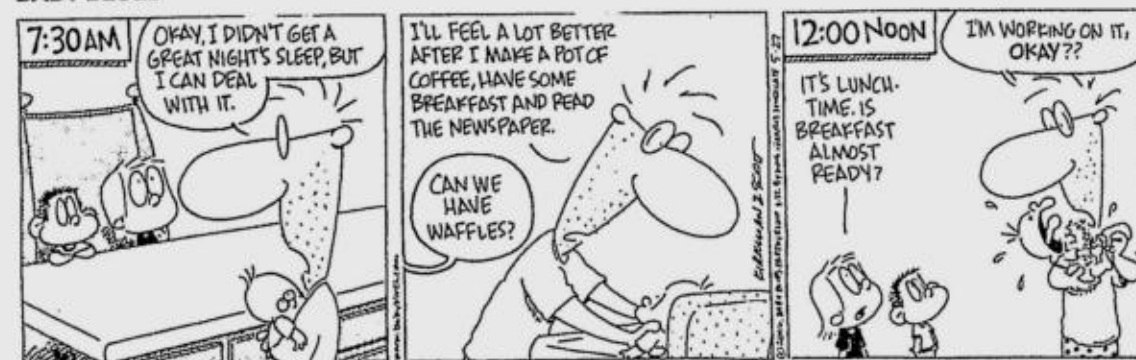
BY TOM ARMSTRONG

PUGAD BABOY



BY P.M. JUNIOR

BABY BLUES



BY JERRY SCOTT

MUTTS



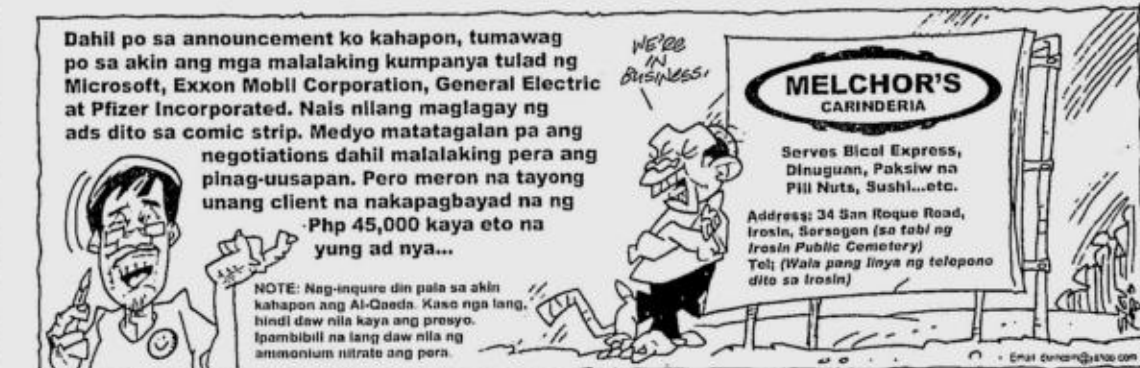
BY PATRICK McDONNELL

ATOMO AND WEBOY



BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY



BY STEVEN PABALINAS

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're a creative free spirit who expresses your talents in an original way. You often introduce new methods, new styles and new ways of doing things. You're both sophisticated and witty. You work with extreme dedication at whatever you pursue. In your middle years, you will put home and family first. Work hard this year to build and construct something important.

Birthdate of: Isadora Duncan, dancer; Jamie Oliver, TV chef; Jeremy Mayfield, NASCAR driver.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): This is an excellent day to make long-term plans about practically anything. You have the ability to see the big picture.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): This is an extremely productive day for you. You've got your thinking cap sitting squarely on your head. You're not fooled by dreams or illusions. You're making realistic plans today.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): If shopping, you'll buy something practical and long-lasting. You certainly want to get the most bang for your buck. You're thrifty and careful about money today.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Give serious thought to plans connected with the government and large institutions today. You won't miss anything; you're on top of things. You see what is possible and what is not.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Talk to bosses and VIPs about your future plans regarding your career path. This is a good day to decide what direction you want your life to go in. Your state of mind is very solid and sensible today.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Everything from ancient ideas to modern philosophies appeals to you today. You're not frivolous about this (not at all). You want to have a better, serious understanding of what makes everything tick.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): This is a good day to tackle red-tape details regarding insurance matters, estates, inheritances, debt and overlooked details.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Sit down with partners and close friends, and decide what you want for yourself in the future. These people are part of your life. Where do they fit in?

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Routine, rather boring work will not bother you today. You have the fortitude, the stamina and the discipline to tackle whatever is on your plate. (Good!)

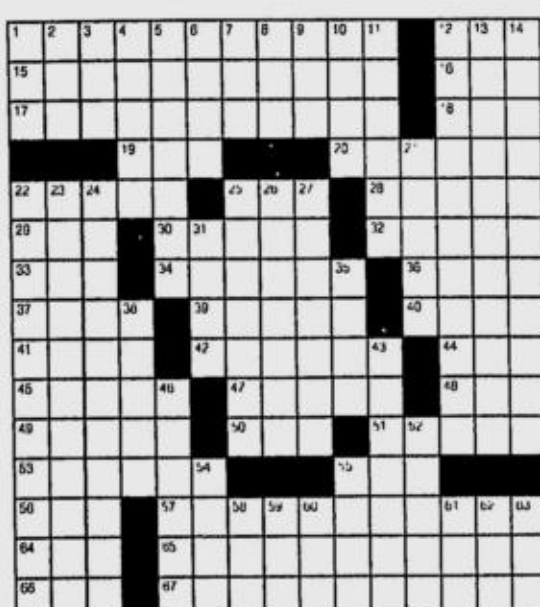
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Older people can teach you something today. Alternatively, you might be responsible for the care of younger people.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You can accomplish extensive, long-lasting repairs at home today. Whatever you do within your home or your family dynamic will be productive, sensible and practical.

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1 Capital of Honduras
- 12 Sedan or coupe
- 15 Active hatreds
- 16 Metal-yielding mineral
- 17 Chow chow choppers?
- 18 Hamm of soccer
- 19 Top gun
- 20 Slings mud
- 22 Uttered, old-style
- 25 Ask for alms
- 28 Blue dyes
- 29 Pause fillers
- 30 Serving dish
- 32 Ballet of Monte Carlo
- 33 Neg.'s opposite
- 34 Cylindrical
- 36 Very German?
- 37 Nice girlfriend?
- 39 Hissy fits
- 40 QED part
- 41 Bird-girl of "Green Mansions"
- 42 Dar es
- 44 Jackie's O
- 45 Herb with aromatic seeds
- 47 Artifact
- 48 Excessively
- 49 Fax ancestor
- 50 Summer hrs.
- 51 Scott of "Backdraft"
- 53 Too routinized
- 55 Roh, Wu of Korea
- 56 Halloween's mo.
- 57 Possible to refute
- 64 Classical leader?
- 65 Marine shocker
- 66 Russ. or Lith., once
- 67 Cowboy toppers
- DOWN
- 1 Tic-toe tile
- 2 Former queen of Spain

By Josiah Brewster
Scranton, PA

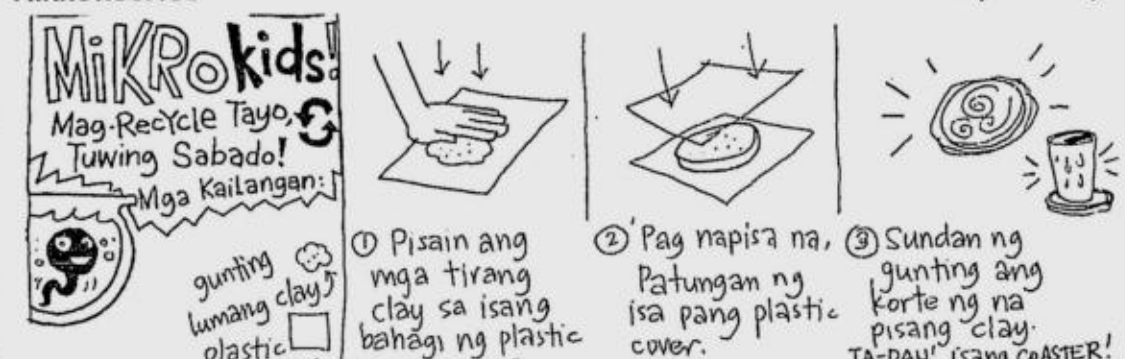
5/27/06

Friday's Puzzle Solved

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- 3 Rummy game
- 4 Inuit craft
- 5 Idea
- 6 Words of realization
- 7 Beat it
- 8 Goddess of folly
- 9 Prevarication
- 10 Cockatoos and cocker spaniels
- 11 Masonry block
- 12 Sympathize
- 13 Israeli general "Arik"
- 14 Second declaration
- 21 Currently occupied
- 22 Intervals
- 23 Solar flares
- 24 One who absorbs knowledge
- 25 College in New York City
- 26 French stars
- 27 Whole that is more than the sum of its parts
- 31 Defeat
- 35 Morales of "Bad Boys"
- 38 Loom bar
- 43 "Riverboat" star
- 46 Darren
- 46 Oozes forth
- 52 Lividate
- 54 Pinball error
- 56 Deere rival
- 58 Bishopric
- 59 %
- 60 Civil lib.
- 61 Arthur of "Maudie"
- 62 Do-over tennis service
- 63 Golfer Ernie

MIKROKOSMOS



BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

BEN



BY DANIEL SHELTON

KIKO MACHINE



BY MANIX ABRERA

LOVEKNOTS



BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

TULDOK



BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

SATURDAY,
MAY 27, 2006

A3-5



"SLITHER." Cheesy, campy—but fun.

Homage to slime and gore flicks

By Noelani Torre

WHO SAYS HORROR FLICKS CAN'T BE fun? Certainly not first-time director James Gunn, whose directorial debut claims to be both a horror movie and a comedy.

If you're familiar with films like "The Thing," "Invasion of the Body Snatchers," "Night of the Living Dead," and practically anything by George Romero, John Carpenter, and David Cronenberg, you'll probably recognize a lot of the elements present in "Slither."

There's the slimy alien life form that arrives on a quiet Southern town via meteorite. The absolutely gross way that the life form goes about invading human bodies, and reproducing in them. Lurching zombies, a ditzy blonde, and a bathroom scene with a cute teen.

Tongue-in-cheek

If the aliens invade a sleepy-redneck-town story and all of the abovementioned sound like they're from every B-horror movie you've ever seen, that's because they are. This is where the comedy is, in the conscious and very tongue-in-cheek use of these gross-out elements.

"Slither," in fact, looks like the work of a man who obviously has a great love for this kind of fare. Gunn, who wrote the script for the highly praised 2004 remake of "Dawn of the Dead," is a self-confessed horror geek, and this movie is his homage to the slime and gore films that not all of us might love, but which we all certainly know.

If you're a fan of the genre, you'll enjoy the fact that the film is peppered with allusions to earlier flicks. Non-fans may not get all the in-jokes, but will still enjoy the zany mix of creeps and laughs. But if you don't enjoy seeing a lot of blood and guts, you may want to skip this since "Slither" is an unabashed grossfest.

Small town

The film is set in the small town of Wheelys, a slow place populated mostly by hicks where things are so boring that the cops spend their time monitoring the speed of passing whip-poorwills.

Then, down comes the alien-carrying meteorite, a slug-like alien invades local millionaire Grant Grant (Michael Rooker of "Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer" fame), pets and cattle start getting mutilated, and the local beauty and Grant's wife Starla (a ditzy Elizabeth Banks) notices that her husband's rash is turning out to be more than just an allergic reaction.

Police chief

She is rescued from her transformed husband (who is turning into some sort of squid) by police chief Bill Pardy (a wonderfully deadpan Nathan Fillion), and pretty soon the only uninfected people left in town are the cute teen (Tania Saulnier) and the foul-mouthed mayor (Gregg Henry).

It's cheesy, campy and generally dumb, but it's also smartly handled, with actors who turn in serious performances (bet they had a lot of fun), and pacing that's only a few gasps away from being completely breathless.

Loving . . . From page A3-6

I never knew how difficult this job was until I tried it myself. Mixing cement and gravel was easy at first—but try doing it for more than five minutes and your back will hurt!

Our third visit to the construction site was for the bricklaying stage. Julius joined our group and he enjoyed the experience so much—lifting hollow blocks and laying them with precision.

Our fourth visit to the site was a fun one—we painted the two-story house with the family's choice of color—light lavender. The activity became even more special because the GK choir serenaded us.

Then, it was time for the ceremonial turnover—an emotional moment for all of us. The Cortes family gave a very simple, moving message of thanks, and we thanked them in turn. Helping build their house was an experience that nourished our souls.

The Bayanihan spirit is alive in the very concept and vision of building a GK house. Mang Manuel is a GK hero himself—he volunteers to build his neighbors' houses. Now, with God's grace, he and his whole family have a house they can proudly call their own.

I went back to visit the Cortes family last January when I accompanied my good friend, Dr. Vicki Belo, her daughter Cristalle, and the Belo staff to Sitio Ruby. They, too, donated houses beside the home of Mang Manuel. It was Dr. Vicki's gift to others on her birthday. Cristalle also did the same on her natal day last April.

Last week, Julius and I were again at Sitio Ruby, to judge a summer art contest empowering the youth and making them discover their true potentials. You see, GK is not just about building a house, it also means building lives—and character.

Thank you, Terrence and Thelma Grana, Couples for Christ cluster head for GK Sitio Ruby; Gerry Santos, project director of GK Sitio Ruby and his wife Chona; Perddie Mendoza, SAGIP project manager of Sitio Ruby, and all the good people of Sitio Ruby. You have enriched our lives, and contributed to our spiritual growth!

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1 X-MEN 3 MTRCB PG-13 1:10, 3:30, 5:50, 8:10, 10:30	3 THE DA VINCI CODE MTRCB R-18 1:20, 4:25, 7:30, 10:35
2 X-MEN 3 MTRCB PG-13 11:40, 2:00, 4:20, 6:40, 9:00	4 THE DA VINCI CODE MTRCB R-18 X-MEN 3 MTRCB PG-13 2:50, 5:30

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ALI MALL CINEMAS

X-MEN 3 12:15 / 2:25 / 4:35 / 6:45 / 8:55	THE DA VINCI CODE 12:05 / 3:00 / 5:55 / 8:50	MISSION IMPOSSIBLE: 3 12:15 / 2:55 / 5:35 / 8:15
THE DA VINCI CODE 12:00 / 2:00 / 4:00 / 6:00 / 8:00	POSEIDON 1:20 / 3:40 / 6:00 / 8:20	

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Loving hands that build

By Tintin Bersola Babao

HAVE YOU EVER EXPERIENCED moving in and out of homes too frequently and having no real permanent address? As a young girl, I did.

My earliest memory of eviction was when I was four years old. It was a small apartment in Cubao. We had no choice but to move out because my father had a falling out with his siblings.

The next years, my parents, only sister and I lived a nomadic life—living in apartments in Cubao, Matatag St., Parafique, Fairview, White Plains, Greenhills, Loyola Heights, etc. We must have lived in more than 25 apartments and houses in my lifetime!

Reasons

There were varied reasons. Most of the time, we were living in dire straits. When my parents sold everything from country club shares to *chicharon* to earn a living, we lived in cramped apartments. When they chanced upon a gold mine selling oriental furniture, we moved to a 1,000-sqm. corner house with a swimming pool in Greenhills.

Then, the business went bankrupt. We sold the house and moved to a smaller home. That was in 1987—I was 17 years old. For the next seven years, the cycle of



AUTHOR (right, center) and friends in the GK house they helped build.

transferring homes continued. One night I told myself, this is it: Someday, I will buy my own house and it will be my permanent residence.

So, when I started earning my own money between 1993-1996, I took a leap of faith, and acquired a loan for a house which I proudly called mine—bought with my blood, sweat and tears.

I only moved out of that home when I married and moved to my conjugal home with Julius. My mom and brother still live in that house today. It is my gift to them.

It is because of my past that I donated and helped build a house

through Gawad Kalinga. Last year, on my 35th birthday, I convinced my high school best buddies that the GK house would be the perfect testament to our 22-year friendship. They all agreed and contributed money; I took care of the rest of the project cost.

Volunteer

Thanks to my "Magandang Umaga, Bayan" co-host, Bernadette Sembrano, who is also a GK volunteer, I got in touch with Issa Santos, GK Head for Partnerships, who furnished me with a list of families whose house I could sponsor. I chose Mang Manuel Cortes' family in Kapamilya Village in Sitio Ruby Fairview.

The day I met the Cortes family was also when their house was going to be demolished, to give way to a new one. I could not believe a space which measured a mere 20 sqm. could fit 16 people!

Aling Helen, the sister of Manuel, told me that they would sleep in a sitting position to fit in the old bunk bed.

Interiors

The interiors would get flooded. And when the water level rose, all of them would just climb onto the bed and stayed there till the water subsided. Almost directly underneath their charcoal "lutuan" was, to my horror, their toilet bowl. Simply put, this wasn't the kind of home the Cortes family deserved.

That Saturday was an emotional day for them—they were going to say goodbye to the house that was witness to their lives' many ups and downs. Yet, they were all thankful: Finally, they would have a decent place to live in. They would no longer be considered squatters.

We all joined hands and closed our eyes in prayer. Minutes later, the "demolition team" composed of GK volunteers pummeled away until the house was reduced to rubble.

My friends and I devoted four weekends to participate in the building process. We were there during the "palitada" stage—

LOVING/A3-5

Montano's 'Sabina' goes onstage at Merk's

By Remy M. Umeraz

IT WAS IN 1950 WHEN NATY Crame Rogers began her career as educator and stage artist at Arena Theater. She assisted Dr. Severino Montano in founding the first community theater. And she was responsible for establishing the Drama Education and Theater Arts program of the Philippine Normal University.



ROGERS. Presents classics to derive inspiration from great literature.

Dynamic force

"Drama can be a dynamic force in the community. By presenting classics, we enrich education and instill love for country and a sense of pride in our cultural heritage, and derive inspiration from great literature," she explains.

In 1984, Naty formed the Philippine Drama Company and began presenting plays in her living room. She staged plays in the home of Engineer and Mrs. Jose Mabanta, in the gardens of Ayala Alabang, in the basketball court of Baguio University, and in the sprawling Kapitolyo Gardens now known as the Aming Tahanan Sala Theater.

The PDC is an outreach arm of the Children and Teachers

Theater of St. Scholastica's College and the University of Sto. Tomas Academic Theater.

In celebration of the 53rd anniversary of Arena Theater, Rogers is directing "Sabina," the one-act play regarded as Montano's finest work.

Sabina is the story of a barrio lass who falls in love with a foreigner, who turns out to be a married man. It stars Ria Ferro, Archie Adamos and June Hebreu.

Presented back-to-back with "Sabina" is the hilarious comedy, "Why Women Wash the Dishes," starring Teri Tolosa, Rico del Rosario and Lala Castillo.

Rogers directs both plays, which run at Merk's Bar and Bistro today. Call 750-1481.

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The undertaking is a novel way of calling attention to the national campaign for responsible television.

PLDT will launch its Smart binggo, while celebrants on board will be feted with Goldilocks cakes. Early

arrivals at the various functions will receive a prize from Cebu Pacific, while Splash/HBC will provide footspas and beauty products to lucky patrons.

A ship-wide logo hunt will be conducted by Negros Navigation and Panasonic, while snacks and drinks will be distributed by Chocquick, Uni-President and URC.

Programs

The event continues on land at the Pizza da Baffo in Boracay, where the Anak TV Boto Ko 'To survey will be conducted to determine which stars and programs on Philippine TV are best or least liked.

An Anak TV screening will be held on board the MS St. Peter the Apostle on its voyage from Iloilo on May 28.

Gift of nature

WHAT IS NUTRITIOUS, DELICIOUS, ORGANIC AND CHEAP? ANSWER: Sweet potato (*kamote*) leaves!

These leaves are rich in chlorophyll and minerals such as calcium, phosphorus, iron and potassium. They are an excellent source of vitamins A, B and C.

LOTUS POND



R. Valencia and S. Bismark

Unfortunately, many people are not interested in them because they have not yet "discovered" the exotic ways of using this wonderful gift of nature. We'd like to share them with you:

Wrappers

First, sweet potato leaves make amazing wrappers. Choose large ones, wash them well, and make different types of fillings. Use fresh leaves to wrap them into little rolls. They are left open at the edges, and look like *lumpiang shanghai*.

Some fillings you can put inside include:

1. Grated papaya with grated ginger, kalamansi juice, crushed peanuts, minced garlic and salt.
2. Short mongo sprouts (togue) with thin strips of sweet potato and carrots sautéed in sesame oil and salt.
3. Fried rice with tofu strips, black beans and garlic.
4. Steamed rice with toasted sesame seeds, seaweed strips and soy sauce.

Second, steam the leaves and then, add vinaigrette. Mix apple cider vinegar, olive oil, little sugar and salt. Then, serve with fresh tomatoes.

Third, cook the sweet potato leaves in coconut milk. Spice it up with black pepper, ginger and salt.

High heat

Fourth, you can heat oil, sauté some garlic, add the leaves, and cook on high heat for a few minutes. Then, shift to low heat and add grated coconut and chopped green pepper. Don't overcook. Remove from heat, and mix in 1 tsp of lemon or kalamansi juice.

Fifth, you can use the leaves to make *tempura*. Use tempura batter, dip the leaves, and fry. Eat with sweet and sour sauce.

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BUSINESS

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Fitch exec says rating upgrade not likely soon

By Doris C. Dumlaog
and Michelle V. Remo

RP revenue-to-GDP ratio 2nd lowest among 98 countries

LONDON-BASED FITCH RATINGS IS NOT LIKELY to upgrade its outlook on Philippine sovereign credit rating any time soon as lingering concerns on the government's revenue collection over the medium-term outweigh recent progress in fiscal reforms.

In an interview at the sidelines of the ACI World Congress at the Philippine International Convention Center, visiting Fitch Ratings senior director and head of Asia sovereign ratings James McCormack yesterday said the current rating of BB—two notches below the much-coveted investment

grade—was still "appropriate" given the existing fiscal weaknesses and recent fiscal gains.

Fitch Ratings' outlook on Philippine government credit is currently "stable" but the government hopes for a revision to "positive" by some of the major global rating agencies toward yearend or

early next year. A "positive" outlook indicates a potential credit-rating upgrade within a year or two.

While the government's fiscal position was now on a "positive" trend, the Hong Kong-based sovereign analyst said it would take much more than meeting rev-

enue collection targets from the value-added tax reform to shore up the sovereign credit grade.

"It has to do with medium-term issues, raising the revenue further and raising revenues relative to GDP (gross domestic product). Here (in the Philippines), it's the second lowest among the countries that we rate and we rate 98 countries. So it's pretty much at

FITCH/B5

ePLDT to buy 100% of SPI Tech

By Daxim L. Lucas

PHILIPPINE LONG DISTANCE TELEPHONE Co. (PLDT) added another company to its growing service portfolio by acquiring one of the biggest business process outsourcing firm in the world.

In a statement, the country's largest telecommunications firm said it had authorized its information and communications technology arm, ePLDT Inc., to acquire 100 percent of the SPI group of companies.

SPI is the second largest "pure-play" business process outsourcing (BPO) company and the ninth biggest independent BPO service provider in the world.

"On May 24, SPI Tech L.P., the parent company of SPI, formally accepted the letter of interest submitted by ePLDT for the acquisition of 100 percent of SPI," the company said.

No price has yet been set for the transaction. PLDT said it would use internally generated cash to fund ePLDT's acquisition of SPI.

"The seller has granted an exclusivity period within which to conduct due diligence on SPI and complete the transaction," PLDT said.

ePLDT has engaged investment banking firm Credit Suisse as its independent financial adviser for the transaction.

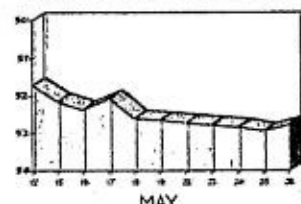
The acquisition of SPI, together with its existing Ventus call center group, will help solidify ePLDT's position as one of the major full-service BPO companies in the industry, the company said.

"[It will] enable ePLDT to benefit greatly from the forecast growth in the BPO sector," the company added.

"The addition of SPI into ePLDT will broaden our participation in the promising BPO sector, which industry analysts forecast to grow at a

EPLDT/B6

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₱ 52.78 = \$

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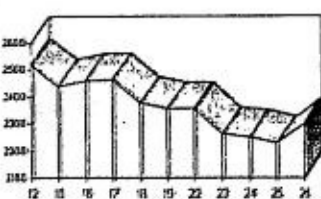
¥ 111.96 = \$1

As of 5 p.m., May 26, 2006

GOLD: \$653.70-654.20

per ounce Hong Kong, May 26, 2006

STOCK MARKET



(See stock market report on Page B5)

Shares close 3.2% higher

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 3.2-PERCENT higher yesterday due to a technical recovery after three straight days of losses, dealers said.

They said sentiment had also improved following gains on Wall Street overnight and in Asian markets earlier Friday.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index gained 71.06 points to close at the day's high of 2,300.39. It earlier touched a low of 2,229.33.

SHARES/B2

WHAT'S INSIDE

RP gets Japan grant for microfinance sector /B2

BOI drums up investor interest in the provinces /B7

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B2

BUSINESS

SATURDAY, MAY 27, 2006

RP gets Japan grant for microfinance sector

By Michelle V. Remo

THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT has agreed to provide the Philippines \$900,000 worth of grant to help develop the country's microfinance industry and make it more useful for households and small businesses.

The grant, approved by the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction (JFPR), will be administered by the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

It will be used to develop the capabilities of cooperatives engaged in credit and savings operations and make them comply better with regulatory rules. It

will also help enhance the capability of the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) in monitoring the operations of cooperatives nationwide.

"Improved access to efficient microfinance services can help the poor smooth their consumption, manage their risk better and build assets," Eiichi Sasaki, ADB financial sector specialist, said during the signing of the grant held at the Department of Finance last Thursday.

"The challenge is how to provide access to sustainable microfinance services for the more than 3 million households in the Philippines that currently do not have access," the

ADB official said.

Sasaki said the grant would complement the \$150 million worth of official development assistance recently approved by the ADB for the Philippines. The \$150 million will fund the Microfinance Development Program, which also focused on building viable microfinance institutions and strengthening regulatory capacity of the CDA.

The National Credit Council, an interagency body headed by the Department of Finance, was tasked to be the implementing agency for the microfinance development projects.

The grant for the Philippines from Japan came despite earlier talks that the Japanese government was considering to suspend the provision of assistance to the Philippines following the failure of the Philippine government to promptly give tax refund claims of Japanese contractors for infrastructure projects.

DOF officials had said that the issue was being addressed as some tax refund claims had already been serviced.

The grant for the development of the microfinance industry followed the Arroyo administration's pronouncements that it would give focus on boosting small- and medium-sized enterprises as a strategy to boost economic growth.

BSP seen raising rates

By Doris C. Dumlaog

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS IS seen under pressure to raise interest rates, most likely by half a percentage point (50 basis points) in the second semester, to make peso-denominated assets more attractive given a global sell-down on emerging market portfolio.

During the opening of the ACI World Congress hosted by Philippine foreign exchange traders, financial market experts predicted that the BSP would have to tighten monetary policy soon to nudge up peso-denominated government bond yields given the negative differentials and the fact that rates had fallen too low versus offshore benchmarks.

The peso has given up most gains against the dollar this year and moved closer to the \$3-\$1 barrier alongside a regional weakness triggered by prospects of higher US interest rates.

In a session on post-Greenspan interest rate regime in the United States, experts expressed mixed views on whether the US Federal Reserve's series of monetary tightening was over. But as far as Asia was concerned, the Philippines is seen among those under pressure to bring up local bond yields to prevent capital outflows.

Michael Spencer, Deutsche Bank chief economist for Asia and head of global market research, said the relatively low interest rates suggested that "capital flows would be very high." Spencer predicted that the BSP would have to raise its overnight rates by 50 basis points in the second half.

"I'm looking at two 25 basis-point hikes in the third and fourth quarter and maybe stretching it to the beginning of next year," Spencer stressed.

"I do think part of their concern is the relatively low level of interest rates which is negative in real terms if you look back to it over time and very low relative to US dollar yields," he said.

Andrew Freris, chief economist and head of fixed income research at BNP Paribas, said Thailand, Malaysia and India had continued to raise interest rates and would likely be the first to ease by the fourth quarter.

He said the Philippines and Taiwan would be among those under pressure to likewise raise interest rates later this year. He said there was a 50-percent probability that there would be an interest rate increase during the BSP's policy rate-setting next week.

Most foreign exchange traders present during the ACI World Congress agreed with the two foreign experts' assessment.

ACI World Congress organizing chair Jose Arnulfo Veloso, treasurer at HSBC Philippines, said: "If currency speculation persists due to emerging market sell-off, then the BSP may be tempted to arrest the peso decline. If only due to inflation cost-push, I don't concur."

"If the BSP will hike rates, I view the maximum will be 50 basis points for the year unless the Fed moves over 5.5 percent call rate," Veloso explained.

Shares . . . From page B1

Volume hit 1.72 billion shares worth P1.79 billion. Gainers beat losers 84 to 13, with 36 stocks unchanged.

The all-shares index rose 37.36 points to 1,437.41.

"The market staged a technical recovery in line with the rise in global markets," said Lawrence de Leon of Accord Capital Equities.

"However, I think we will continue to see volatility in the near term largely because of external developments, particularly concerns about rising interest rates in the US and volatile commodity prices," he said.

Heavyweight Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) led the rally, rising P60 to P2,010.

Ayala Land Inc. advanced 75 centavos to P12.75 and its parent, Ayala Corp., rose P7.50 to P407.50. Ayala Corp. unit Bank of the Philippine Islands was up P3 at P63.50.

Food and beverage giant San Miguel Corp.'s A-shares were steady at P63.50 and its B-shares were unchanged at P76.

AFP

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Lot 6226-E Road Lot, Purok 6, San Vicente

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Lot 586-D-3 Bermudez Subd., Apokon

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LOT 14 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT

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Minimum Bid Price: 423,000.00

LOT 18 - W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT

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Lot 387-C-3-C-2-F-2, Daneco Rd., Tipaz

Minimum Bid Price: 405,750.00

LOT 19 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT

Lot Area: 789.00 sqm.
Floor Area: 102.00 sqm.
Lot 401-C-2-B-10-A Doctolero Ave., Tipaz

Minimum Bid Price: 1,254,000.00

LOT 20 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT

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LOT 22 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT

Lot Area: 170.00 sqm.
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Floor Area: 59.00 sqm.
Lot 59 Palmera Subd., Km48, Canocotan

Minimum Bid Price: 313,600.00

LOT 24 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT

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Lot 488 H-2-E-5-B-2-A, Gante Road, Pioneer Ave.

Minimum Bid Price: 1,246,500.00

LOT 25 - W/ MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT

Lot Area: 500.00 sqm.
Lot 708-B Manga I-B, Purok Bayanhan, Visayan Vill.

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LOT 26 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT

Lot Area: 900.00 sqm.
Floor Area: 822.00 sqm.
Lot 708-T-1 Existing Rd. Purok Bayanhan, Visayan Vill.

Minimum Bid Price: 1,240,000.00

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Lot 387-G-15 D.

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LOT 30 - VACANT LOT

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Lot 84 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan

Minimum Bid Price: 103,200.00

LOT 31 - VACANT LOT

Lot Area: 518.00 sqm.
Lot 84 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan

Minimum Bid Price: 104,000.00

LOT 32 - VACANT LOT

Lot Area: 513.00 sqm.
Lot 114 B4 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan

Minimum Bid Price: 102,400.00

LOT 33 - VACANT LOT

Lot Area: 512.00 sqm.
Lot 124 B4 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan

Minimum Bid Price: 102,400.00

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Lot 5 Blik 4 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan

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Lot Area: 500.00 sqm.
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Lot Area: 500.00 sqm.
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LOT 40 - VACANT LOT

Lot Area: 500.00 sqm.
Lot 83 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan

Minimum Bid Price: 100,000.00

LOT 41 - VACANT LOT

Lot Area: 500.00 sqm.
Lot 83 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan

Minimum Bid Price: 100,000.00

LOT 42 - VACANT LOT

Lot Area: 500.00 sqm.
Lot 83 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan

Minimum Bid Price: 100,000.00

LOT 43 - VACANT LOT

Lot Area: 514.00 sqm.
Lot 82 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan

Minimum Bid Price: 103,200.00

LOT 44 - VACANT LOT

Lot Area: 514.00 sqm.
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LOT 45 - VACANT LOT

Lot Area: 514.00 sqm.
Lot 85 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan

Minimum Bid Price: 103,200.00

LOT 46 - VACANT LOT

Lot Area: 516.00 sqm.
Lot 85 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan

Minimum Bid Price: 100,000.00

LOT 47 - VACANT LOT

Lot Area: 500.00 sqm.
Lot 86 Purok 2-A, Tandang Sora St., Canocotan

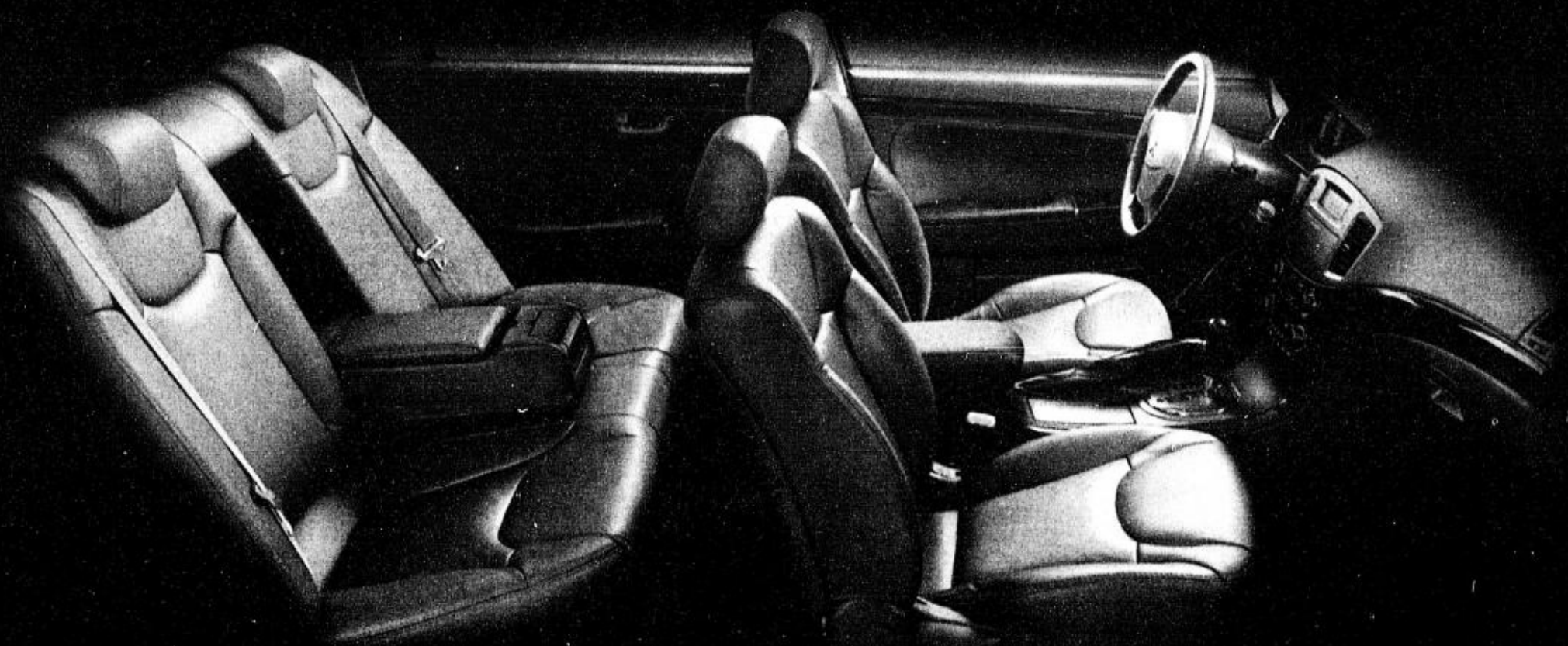
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Invisibility cloak soon a reality?

WASHINGTON—Imagine an invisibility cloak that works just like the one Harry Potter inherited from his father.

Researchers in England and the United States think they know how to do that. They are laying out the blueprint and calling for help in developing the exotic materials needed to build a cloak.

The keys are special manmade materials, unlike any in nature or the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. These materials are intended to steer light and other forms of electromagnetic radiation around an object, rendering it as invisible as something tucked into a hole in space.

"Is it science fiction? Well, it's theory and that already is not science fiction. It's theoretically possible to do all these Harry Potter things, but what's standing in the way is our engineering capabilities," said John Pendry, a physicist at the Imperial College London.

Details of the study, which Pendry co-wrote, appear in Thursday's online edition of the journal *Science*.

Scientists not involved in the

work said it presents a solid case for making invisibility an attainable goal.

Metamaterials

"This is very interesting science and a very interesting idea and it is supported on a great mathematical and physical basis," said Nader Engheta, a professor of electrical and systems engineering at the University of Pennsylvania. Engheta has done his own work on invisibility using novel materials called metamaterials.

Pendry and his co-authors also propose using metamaterials because they can be tuned to bend electromagnetic radiation—radio waves and visible light, for example—in any direction.

A cloak made of those materials, with a structure designed down to the submicroscopic scale, would neither reflect light nor cast a shadow.

Instead, like a river streaming around a smooth boulder, light and all other forms of electromagnetic radiation would strike the cloak and simply flow around it, continuing on as if it never bumped up against an obstacle. That would give an onlooker the apparent ability to peer right through the cloak,



with everything tucked inside concealed from view.

18 months away

"Yes, you could actually make someone invisible as long as someone wears a cloak made of this material," said Patanjali Parimi, a Northeastern University physicist and design engineer at Chelton Microwave Corp. in Bolton, Massachusetts.

Such a cloak does not exist, but early versions that could mask microwaves and other forms of electromagnetic radiation could be as close as 18 months away, Pendry said. He said the study

was "an invitation to come and play with these new ideas."

"We will have a cloak after not too long," he said.

The Pentagon's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency supported the research, given the obvious military applications of such stealthy technology.

While Harry Potter could wear his cloak to skulk around Hogwarts, a real-world version probably would not be something just to be thrown on, Pendry said.

"To be realistic, it's going to be fairly thick. Cloak is a misnomer. 'Shield' might be more appropriate," he said.

2 drugs can help prevent breast cancer

By Charles E. Buban

RALOXIFENE IS AS EFFECTIVE as tamoxifen in reducing the risk of breast cancer in postmenopausal women at increased risk for the disease. This is the result of the nearly completed five-year Study of Tamoxifen and Raloxifene (STAR), the largest North American breast cancer prevention trial undertaken.

Since 1998, tamoxifen has been the only drug available to reduce breast cancer risk. However, tamoxifen also triggers menopausal symptoms like hot flashes and slightly increases the chances of a woman developing uterine cancers, blood clots, strokes and cataracts.

On the other hand, raloxifene (developed by Eli Lilly under the brand name Evista) was approved in 1997 for the prevention of osteoporosis in postmenopausal women. Researchers took a second look at raloxifene after studies showed that fewer women who took the drug developed breast cancer compared to those taking a placebo.

Fewer side effects

The STAR trial showed that both drugs reduced the risk of developing invasive breast cancer by about 50 percent, but women who took raloxifene daily had 36 per-

cent fewer uterine cancers and 29 percent fewer blood clots than the women who took tamoxifen.

Also, initial results from the STAR suggest that raloxifene does not increase the risk of developing a cataract, as tamoxifen does.

The final results of the trial, involving 19,747 women in more than 500 centers across the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico, will be known later this year.

Significant step

Dr. Lilia Luna, a senior consultant at the FEU-Dr. Nicanor Reyes Medical Foundation Medical Center's Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, said the positive news from the STAR trial is a significant step in the country's fight against breast cancer.

She pointed out that the Philippines has one of the highest incidence of breast cancer in all of Asia.

Postmenopausal Filipino women, she said, would now have a choice of two breast cancer risk reduction drugs.

Raloxifene and tamoxifen belong to a class of drugs known as selective estrogen receptor modulators, or SERMs. Luna said these drugs achieve the positive effects of traditional estrogen therapy, including stabilizing bone mass and improving lipid profile, and avoid the negative effects like increased risk of uterine cancer and breast cancer.

Car of the future

WITH RISING GAS PRICES AND environmental destruction, there is an imperative need for car companies to come up with creative solutions. Toyota has its electric hybrid Prius, and now DaimlerChrysler has fuel cells. The latter technology is almost too good to be true: imagine driving a Mercedes-Benz, no less, and emitting not noxious gas, but water!

How is this possible? According to the auto manufacturer, the power unit of this car of the future operates on hydrogen, either in pure form or bound in a compound. This hydrogen, together with oxygen, is converted into electricity, which can then be used to power the motor. Voila! The only substance produced in this entire process is water, or more accurately, water vapor. What's more, the fuel cell drive is doubly more efficient than conventional petrol engine.

20 prototypes

Last April at The Loft at Rockwell Center, CATS Motors and DaimlerChrysler held a symposium on innovative technologies. They have the right to be proud. Since the 1990s, DaimlerChrysler has been researching on fuel cell technology, and around 20 prototypes have already come into being.

In 2001, the minivan Natrium (from the German and Latin word for sodium) displayed an innovative way to store hydrogen—not from gas tanks but generated directly from sodium borohydride, a white salt. A year later, the NECAR 5, a fuel cell running on methanol, set a long-distance record by crossing the USA from San Francisco to Washington. In 2004, at the Geneva International Motor Show, the Jeep Treo concept demonstrated how the fuel cell can power a vehicle with two electric motors and four-wheel drive.

Reliable fuel supply

Fuel cells are rapidly being adapted around the world. Since 2003, 60 cars have been subjected to tests in everyday operation with selected customers in the USA, Europe, Japan and Singapore. In 10 European cities and later this year in Australia, more than 30 fuel cell buses are already in operation plying their usual routes. In Hamburg, the company Hermes-Versand has already been using a fuel cell Sprinter vehicle since 2001 to deliver packages. UPS did the same in 2004.

The catch? A reliable fuel supply infrastructure must be built, and more innovations be done to make the cars affordable to the public.

Leyte is now an integral part of the DaimlerChrysler operation.

EUREKA!

Queena N. Lee-Chua



Since 2004, abaca fibers have been used in the outer cover of the spare-wheel compartment on the three-door version of the Mercedes-Benz A-class. This is the first ever application of a natural fiber in a car's exterior.

Abaca fibers are excellent, with strength, durability and other properties similar to those of glass fibers. What's more, abaca fiber production is less energy intensive, achieving up to 60 percent energy savings, which significantly reduce the emission of carbon dioxide and other poisonous gases.

Reforestation

At the Abaca Processing Center at Leyte State University, various projects are underway, such as selecting suitable plants, improving cultivation, processing fiber, reforesting the rain forest, training farmers, and developing the best mix for cars.

Best of all, our forests regenerate. According to DaimlerChrysler, "For about 50 years now, there has been very little rain forest left in the Philippines. It was cleared primarily to take space for coconut plantations. The goal of the abaca project is to replace this monoculture with domestic plants and trees. The partners in the project instruct farmers in reforestation farming. There is no more exclusive planting of coconuts, but mixed cultivation with abaca, bananas, manioc and durian trees."

Stops soil erosion

"The natural reforestation of the rain forest stops the soil erosion caused by clear cutting and large-area felling. It stabilizes the slopes that can be carried away by landslides. And ultimately, there is a chance of maintaining the enormous variety of species, which is actually higher in the Philippines than in the Amazon rain forest."

"At the same time, abaca processing creates jobs for the local farmers, multiplying their income tenfold and improving their living conditions."

Other partners in the project include the German Investment and Development Association, Hohenheim University, Reutlingen Polytechnic College, the National Abaca Research Center, the European Nature Heritage Fund and the company Rieter.

Early morning BP surge risky

By Rafael R. Castillo, MD

CONTRARY TO WHAT MOST people think, blood pressure generally increases in the early morning, hours just before one wakes up and is sustained until mid-morning. It then gradually decreases during the day and even dips at night when one is sleeping, before it surges during the early morning hours. This is called the normal diurnal pattern of the BP.

The early morning surge, no matter how restful one's sleep is, has been identified as the culprit behind the increased incidence of strokes and heart attacks, even sudden death, in the early morning hours.

Recently published studies in elderly patients suggest that hypertension in the morning hours is a strong, independent predictor of future stroke events, and this has been shown as a greater risk than having sustained hypertension during the daytime.

A morning surge in blood pressure has also been identified as a better predictor of stroke than extreme dips in the BP at night.

Extreme dipping of the BP

when one is asleep is also associated with stroke risk when followed by an excessive BP surge in the early morning hours before waking up. Doctors usually ask hypertensive patients to check their BP upon waking up just before they take their next dose of their BP-lowering pills. This gives the physician an idea of the patient's BP condition during the early morning hours.

In problematic cases, the physician may even request for a 24-hour BP recording through a device which measures the BP intermittently even while one is asleep.

Normal pattern

The normal diurnal BP pattern even in healthy nonhypertensive individuals reflects the falling of the BP during the night and rising during the early morning hours prior to awakening. Abnormal diurnal patterns include the sustained level of the BP at night ("nondippers"). Nondippers usually have more damage to the vital organs, including the brain, heart, and

kidneys. The risk is even higher when the BP during sleep is actually higher than during the waking hours, and this group has been called "risers."

Dr. Kazuomi Kario of the Jichi Medical School in Tochigi, Japan, and his colleagues have identified another subtype of abnormal diurnal variation. These are the so-called extreme dippers, who have a higher frequency of both "silent" (no symptoms) and clinical brain disease which subsequently ends up in stroke or early decline in mental function called dementia.

Extreme dippers may also have an exaggerated morning surge of the BP. They have shown that risers have the worst stroke prognosis, and extreme dippers are at an intermediate risk.

78% of strokes

In the study, researchers found that 78 percent of the stroke events occurred between 6 a.m. and noon in those with a significant early morning BP surge, compared with 41 percent in

those without the early morning surge—a clinically significant difference.

"An excessive morning surge was an independent predictor of stroke in elderly patients with hypertension," Dr. Kario concluded. He added that although in their previous work, they showed that extreme dippers are at an increased risk of stroke, the culprit mechanism may actually be the morning surge, rather than excessive low blood pressure during the night.

Dr. Kario speculated that the early morning BP surge may trigger platelet stickiness or hyperaggregation leading to the formation of blood clots inside the arteries.

So it's best for hypertensive patients who exercise early in the morning to take first their antihypertensive pills as soon as they wake up and allow some time for it to take effect before doing strenuous exercise. Physicians have to make sure also that whatever drug regimen they give for high blood pressure should be able to extend up to the early morning hours until their patients take their next dose.

MEDICAL FILES

Dipstick assay

DISCOVER



Massie Santos Ballon

ies from mice broke down at approximately 70 degrees Celsius. If these were used for the dipstick test, the product wouldn't be very useful because it meant that the consumer would have to wait until the hot beverage had cooled enough to get an accurate reading.

In the interest of instant gratification then, it turns out camels such as llamas and camels can produce caffeine-specific antibodies that are stable at higher temperatures. Ladenson et al. got three llamas in Washington state named Fanfare, Virtual and Very Señorita and two Eritrean-based camels named Masawa and Assab to the cause.

Their involvement made the project a truly international effort.

To produce the desired antibodies, the animals were regularly injected with small doses of caffeine over several weeks. Each of the llamas and camels donated approximately half a liter of blood rich with the desired antibodies.

The researchers separated the antibodies and tested them for stability at various tem-

peratures. Some of the caffeine-specific antibodies, specifically those from Very Señorita, were found to be able to withstand temperatures close to 90 degrees Celsius.

When these selected antibodies were used in a crude version of the dipstick assay and tested against more established and less portable caffeine assays, Ladenson et al. found that their antibody test was just as accurate.

Tea, chocolate

Also worth noting was that the llama's caffeine-specific antibodies could distinguish between caffeine and caffeine-like chemicals such as theobromine and theophylline, which are found in tea and chocolate. This meant that any tests for caffeine wouldn't be skewed by similar chemicals in the beverage.

"Now that we've isolated the sequence of this stable anticaffeine antibody, we can produce copies in the lab...[and] we don't need to rely on the animals," Ladenson noted in a WUSM press release.

So to Fanfare, Virtual, Very Señorita, Masawa, and Assab: thank you for your blood. You've made a memorable and valuable contribution to science.

The caffeine dipstick test may or may not eventually make it onto supermarket shelves. Once it does, it may either become a very profitable enterprise or else remain a novelty item. However the product ultimately does on the market, perhaps the researchers will reward you with immortality by naming the test after you. At the very least, one can only hope they've already given you an extra share of grain.



BDO shelves merger plan for now

Banco de Oro this year expects to post net income of P3.1B

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

BANCO DE ORO UNIVERSAL Bank of mall taipan Henry Sy Sr. still wants to merge with third largest Equitable PCI Bank but, for now, it has put on hold all merger offers, BDO president Nestor Tan yesterday said in a press briefing.

Tan said that BDO is still willing to talk about plans concerning Equitable PCI Bank—now dominated by the SM Group—if shareholders are open to the proposal.

He stressed however that "this was not a [formal] offer" for a merger.

"At the moment, yes, we are abandoning our proposal to swap BDO shares for Equitable PCI shares," Tan said. "Our willingness to talk is not an offer. We are willing to talk, but there is no offer at the moment."

Tan yesterday admitted that other shareholders of Equitable PCI have not looked favorably on BDO's merger proposal.

"We put in more than P1 billion in [Equitable PCI], and we can't just forget about it," Tan added. "Our long-term plan is still for consolidation. Other shareholders don't want it. In the meantime, we have put [the merger plans] in the backburner and focus on organic growth."

Tan said the bank expects to grow its net income to P3.1 billion this year from P2.54 billion in 2005 despite anemic loan growth.

Growth will largely be driven by deposits, the expansion of its business via additional branches from recently acquired United Overseas Bank (UOB), as well as income from fees.

BDO has recently completed the integration of UOB into its wing, which has resulted in the growth of the number of branches to 224.

Following the acquisition, BDO will have expanded its reach to include key provincial areas such as Baguio, Batangas, Dagupan, Davao and Iloilo.

Aboitiz eyes more efficient ships as fuel costs dampen financials

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE COUNTRY'S LARGEST commercial shipping line is shopping for new vessels to cut down on fuel costs amid the high price of crude oil in the international market that has further widened its losses in the first quarter.

The board of directors of Aboitiz Transport System Corp. is now evaluating several reflecting proposals, according to its chairman Jon Ramon Aboitiz, shortly after he attended the company's annual meeting.

"So far, the only decision we've made is to ... rationalize [operations] and look for more fuel-efficient vessels," Aboitiz said. "[As to] what type of vessels, that is still being studied at this time."

At present, the company operates a total of 14 vessels—11 in its SuperFerry fleet plus three in its Cebu Ferry line—which are al-

ready some of the most efficient and youngest commercial ships operating in the country.

ATSC's vessels carry a mix of passengers and cargo to destinations nationwide.

With a downtime rate of only 0.015 percent, Aboitiz said the company's efficiency level can already be considered "world-class."

"As a whole, we have pretty efficient vessels," he said. "But you have to keep in mind that however efficient your vessels are, with fuel cost at \$70 per barrel, it has an impact on your bottom line."

In the first quarter of the year, ATSC posted a net loss of P192.4 million from loss of P167.2 million in the same period in 2005.

Aboitiz emphasized that the company is now looking for ways to save on fuel on top of merely buying more fuel-efficient ships and retiring less efficient ones.

"We're looking at different

ways of becoming more efficient in order to negate the very big increases that we've had in fuel," the ATSC chairman said. "It's very hard. Anybody who's in the fuel intensive business is having difficulty."

Where ATSC's fuel costs stood at only 25 percent of total revenues, it now stands at 39 percent due to rising fuel costs.

He said, however, that the company's good cash flow has helped it weather the storm, giving it enough elbow room to even reduce its debt burden.

"We're reducing our debt," he said, adding that the repayment was sourced from internally-generated funds. "Last year, it was [a reduction of] over P300 million."

During the stockholders' meeting, the ATSC board also approved an option to convert preferred shares to common shares to increase its capital.



WORLD'S LARGEST

Terminix, the world's largest termite and pest control company, held its first international conference in Manila last month. Among those who attended the event are (from left to right) Col. Demosthenes Doplayna of ServiceMaster Philippines; Jim Wassell of ServiceMaster USA; Bisher Mufti, vice president of ServiceMaster USA; Brent Omdahl of the Embassy of the United States; Atty. Edilberto Bravo, president & CEO of ServiceMaster Philippines; and Fred Strickland, vice president of Terminix USA.

GFI loans for SMEs reach P7.9B in Q1

By Christine A. Gaylican

GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (GFIs) in the first quarter issued some P7.9 billion in loans to small and medium scale enterprises employing an estimated 98,336 Filipinos nationwide.

According to Zorayda Amelia C. Alonzo, Trade and Industry undersecretary for SME development, the Land Bank of the Philippines led the list of GFIs when it offered a total of P3.7 billion in loans to SME clients. The Development Bank of the Philippines followed with P3.1 billion in loans. The others were the Philippine Export-Import Credit Agency (PhilExim) with some P62 million, the Small Business Guarantee and Finance Corp. (SB Corp.), with P829 million, the Quedan Rural Credit and Guarantee Corp.

(Quedancor) with P92 million, and the National Livelihood Support Fund (NLSF) with P13.9 million.

Alonzo said that with the first quarter loan figure, a total of P93.28 billion has been offered under the SME Unified Lending Opportunities for National Growth (Sulong) Program.

The program aims to provide SMEs with easier credit access. "That should be able to translate into half a million jobs, roughly the same as last year," said Alonzo, who is also chairperson and chief executive officer of SB Corp.

For the first quarter, according to Alonzo, 678 SMEs were given technical assistance on product development in order to join trade shows, including the National Trade Fair, Tarlac Furniture Show, Fashion Week

and Go Negosyo Summit.

"With the product innovations, it must be noted that some P19 million has been earned by participating SMEs during the National Trade Fair alone," she said.

Another program the government is pushing is the One Town One Product-Philippines (Otop-Philippines) Program.

The program aims to promote entrepreneurship and create jobs. It also encourages the country's micro, small and medium enterprises to produce and market distinct products or services using indigenous raw materials and manpower.

Through Otop-Philippines, local government executives will take the lead in identifying, developing, and promoting a specific product or service which has a competitive advantage.

Filinvest sets aside P4.5B for key projects

THE GOTIANUN-LED FILINVEST conglomerate has set aside roughly P4.5 billion for key projects of its major companies this year, said Josephine Gotianun-Yap, Filinvest Development Corp. president.

Following yesterday's stockholders' meeting of the group's property arm Filinvest Land Inc. (FLI), Yap said the group this year would spend about P2.5 billion for information technology-related developments of Filinvest Alabang Inc., P1.5 billion for residential projects of FLI, and P500 million for FDC's seaside project in Mactan, Cebu.

To address the pressing demand for IT office spaces, Cyberzone Properties Inc., the facilities provider of FAI has started constructing Plaz@ A, a six-storey building with a leasable area of 11,000 square meters at the NorthGate Cyberzone in Alabang.

Plaz@ A is expected to be completed by June this year. Locators in the area include GenPact, an outsourcing subsidiary of General Electric and eTelecare.

CPI also broke ground last February on Plaz@ D, a mirror image of Plaz@ A. By the second quarter this year, a third building will be built.

FLI on the other hand plans to launch new middle income residential projects this year, such as The Pines at South Peak in Laguna, Spring Heights 2 in Quezon City and Ashton Fields in Laguna.

The Filinvest Group is also developing what it hopes will become Cebu's premiere seaside residential resort on a 12-hectare seaside property, dubbed Seascapes Resort Town. This will be scheduled for launch this year.

Elizabeth L. Sanchez

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE (As of May 26, 2006)					
STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH FINANCIAL BANKS	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	5.8	5.8	5.5	5.5	23,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	36.5	37	35.5	37	1,635,300
Bank of the Phil. Islands	61.5	63.5	61.5	63.5	1,835,700
China Banking Corp.	875	890	875	890	560
Citystate Savings Bank	20.25	20.25	20.25	20.25	1,400,000
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.4	0.41	0.4	0.4	22,500
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	65.5	72	65.5	72	159,000
International Exch. Bank	40.5	41	40.5	41	950,600
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	37	37.5	37	37	13,600
Philippine National Bank	33.5	33.5	33	33	3,700
Phil. Savings Bank	38.5	39.5	39.5	39.5	8,200
Philippine Trust Co.	38	38	38	38	16,800
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	16	16	15	16	176,200
Security Bank Corp.	49.5	50	48.5	50	16,500
Union Bank of the Phil.	46	48	46	48	
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
First Abacus Financial	0.49	0.5	0.47	0.5	200,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	31	31.5	31	31.5	15,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2100	2100	2090	2090	350
Ivantage Corp.	1.26	1.32	1.24	1.24	11,519,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Gen Corp.	47	49	47	48	110,100
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	46	46.5	46	46.5	429,300
Manila Electric Co. A	13	13.5	13	13.5	16,300
Manila Electric Co. B	20.75	21.25	20.75	21.25	1,002,100
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.8	6.9	6.8	6.8	4,028,000
Petrone Corp.	4.25	4.4	4.25	4.4	6,056,000
Salcom Power Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	75,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.25	3.3	3.25	3.25	77,000
CAPO Group Corp.	3	3	3	3	10,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	23.25	23.25	23.25	23.25	15,500
Jollibee Foods Corp.	36	36.5	36	36.5	375,700
Pancake House Inc.	3.85	3.85	3.85	3.85	20,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.85	2.9	2.8	2.85	1,481,000
San Miguel Corp. A	63	63.5	63	63.5	88,900
San Miguel Corp. B	76	76	75.5	76	53,100
Universal Robina Corp.	19	19.25	19	19	3,936,200
Vitarich Corp.	0.24	0.24	0.22	0.22	1,510,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.32	0.32	0.3	0.31	730,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.42	1.46	1.38	1.38	1,320,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.4	4.5	4.4	4.5	167,000
Republic Cement Corp.	1.2	1.24	1.18	1.18	60,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Global Equities Inc.	0.0975	0.0975	0.095	0.095	3,900,000
Panasonic Mtg Phil Corp.	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.6	3,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	23,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	10,000,000
Ayala Corp.	405	410	402.5	407.5	274,040
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.53	0.53	0.53	0.53	220,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.3	240,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	11.75	11.75	11.75	11.75	1,000
Ajo Net Holdings Inc.	0.027	0.029	0.027	0.027	11,600,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.3	3.3	3.15	3.15	2,196,000
APC Group Inc.	0.225	0.225	0.22	0.22	150,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	17,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.9	0.93	0.9	0.91	1,640,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	1.42	1.42	1.4	1.4	730,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9.8	9.8	9.7	9.8	61,000
Berapres Holdings Corp.	1.1	1.16	1.1	1.1	13,795,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.8	3.95	3.7	3.95	1,908,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	3.1	3.3	3.1	3.25	1,132,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	6.7	6.8	6.7	6.8	536,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.54	1.54	1.54	1.54	6,000
Simphill Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	3,700,000
SM Investments Corp.	220	224	220	224	313,120
Unilab Res. & Holdings Co	0.0525	0.055	0.0525	0.055	1,300,000
Wellx Industries Inc.	0.105	0.105	0.1	0.1	1,000,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	12.5	12.75	12.5	12.75	18,113,100
Belle Corp.	1.14	1.18	1.12	1.14	3,275,000
Cityland Development Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	990,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	2.06	2.1	2.06	2.06	796,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.195	0.2	0.195	0.2	2,200,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.58	0.6	0.58	0.58	8,510,000
Ever-Goteco Resources	0.042	0.042	0.039	0.039	12,700,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.36	1.42	1.36	1.4	6,779,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.0825	0.0825	0.0825	0.0825	200,000
Interport Res.	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	10,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	5,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.235	0.235	0.235	0.235	20,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.52	0.53	0.52	0.52	810,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.58	1.58	1.54	1.56	74,472,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.22	0.23	0.22	0.22	7,400,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	200,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.21	0.26	0.21	0.26	20,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	10.5	11	10.5	11	67,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.31	1,120,000
SM Development Corp.	1.58	1.62	1.58	1.62	361,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.8	7.9	7.7	7.9	4,522,000
Unilab Holdings Inc.	0.075	0.0875	0.075	0.08	11,300,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	14.75	16	14.75	15.75	203,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.26	1.28	1.26	1.26	6,828,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	915	930	915	920	45,290
Philpino Tel. Corp.	3.65	3.75	3.65	3.7	6,597,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1950	2010	1950	2010	174,940
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.2	0.205	0.195	0.2	600,000
Ionics Inc.	1.86	1.9	1.86	1.9	297,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	8,000,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.4	24,000
Philweb Corp.	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	241,800,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	21,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	100,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	13.5	13.75	13.5	13.5	330,200
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Acesite Phils Hotel Corp.	5	5	3.65	4.45	252,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	200,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.57	0.57	0.57	0.57	1,400,000
EDUCATION					
Ipeople Inc.	2.95	3	2.95	3	72,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.1	2.22	2.1	2.1	421,000
Paxys Inc.	11.25	11.5	11.25	11.25	169,400
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	2.9	3.2	2.9	3.1	3,614,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	2.9	3.25	2.9	3.15	3,848,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.008	0.0085	0.008	0.0085	63,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	6.7	7.1	6.7	7	35,000
Banquet Corp.	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	10,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62	45,990,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.31	0.31	0.29	0.29	6,900
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.34	0.35	0.34	0.34	92,950
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.023	0.024	0.023	0.023	179,900
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.024	0.025	0.024	0.024	417,000
Omicor Corp.	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	17,900
Philmix Mining Corp. A	3.75	3.85	3.7	3.75	19,000
Philmix Mining Corp. B	3.8	3.9	3.7	3.75	19,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	27.5	28	27.5	27.5	1,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.32	0.35	0.32	0.32	1,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.54	0.55	0.53	0.55	1,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.28	0.29	0.28	0.29	226,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	62,600
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	26,100
The Philodrill Corp. A	1.18	1.24	1.16	1.2	2,100
The Philodrill Corp. B	1.18	1.22	1.16	1.18	2,100
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	14.25	14.25	13.75	13.75	
PREFERRED					
PLDT (10% Pref) Series P	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ARS-CBN Hldcs. Corp. (PDR)	15.25	16	15	15.75	

Exporters optimistic, look to sustain growth

Demand for electronics rising in Asia; weak peso helping

OPTIMISM AMONG PHILIPPINE exporters is growing after years of tepid performance and it's not just down to strong global demand for electronics, the country's main export.

Increased investment, firm demand from China and a more stable economic backdrop all suggest exports are starting to make a break from the past—as long as government and industry seize the opportunity to lock in the gains.

"I would like to believe this is the start of a trend and most export items seem to be doing well," said Sergio Ortiz Luis, president of the Philippine Exporters Confederation.

Exports in the first quarter climbed 13.8 percent from a year earlier.

March's annual rise of 26 percent was the biggest for a single month in 6 1/2 years.

In the last six years, the Philippines has seen its share of total Asian exports decline.

In 2005, its share was less than 2 percent, the lowest in Asia.

Economists said a pick-up should be seen in the context of strong demand for electronics that is boosting exports across Asia, with the Philippines having a long way to go toward sustain-

able growth.

But they added there were more reasons to be hopeful than six months ago, including a weakening of the peso.

The peso has fallen more than 3 percent since May 8 to almost 53 per dollar, and this could provide some comfort to Philippine firms that have suffered from currency strength in the past year.

The value of exports—which also include garments, vehicle parts, coconut oil, fruit and wooden furniture—is equivalent to about 40 percent of Philippine gross domestic product, so a sharp pick-up would mean a significant boost to the economy.

Arthur Young, president of the Semiconductor and Electronics Industries in the Philippines Inc., said growth in semiconductor exports could double in 2006 to more than 15 percent.

Electronics, largely assembled from imported parts, comprise up to two-thirds of total exports.

As investment in electronics rises, growth in exports should follow, Young said.

Spending on expansion by electronics firms in the Philippines was expected to continue an uptrend this year after rising 76 percent to \$776 million in 2005 and 63 percent in 2004.

"If you look at the poor performance before, it was because investment was low," said Young.

"2006 has started well because investment is strong."

Young, also chief executive at PSI Technologies Inc., a maker of power conversion chips, said his firm would likely invest \$5-to-8 million this year to expand its facilities, up from \$4-to-5 million last year.

The Philippines, like its Asian neighbors, faces tough competition from China's low-cost, mass-production base.

For example, in late 2004 Japan's Toshiba Corp. closed its Philippine laptop computer facility and moved it to China.

But China also offered opportunities for exporters.

Ortiz Luis pointed to Chinese demand for Philippine agricultural products.

Firms in the garments sector were adjusting to Chinese competition and other companies were also providing support services to foreign businesses, he said.

"Five years ago, we were hardly moving anything to China, but in the last two years our average growth rate in exports to China has been between 50 and 70 percent," said Ortiz Luis.

Economists said the Philip-

pines still needs to do much more, including widening its export base and improving infrastructure.

One risk is that the country's export mix is dominated by the same kind of electronics products that China excels in producing.

The Philippines supplies about 10 percent of the world's semiconductor manufacturing services needs, including mobile phone chips and micro processors.

"The Philippines is concentrated in one sort of chips," said Annina Kaltenbrunner, economist for Asia-Pacific at Global Insight in London.

"If demand gets diverted from this one technology the Philippines is producing, this could represent a major risk."

Peter Wallace, president of consulting firm Wallace Business Forum, said the Philippines should develop niche areas such as mining and agriculture, and invest more in English language skills, if it wanted to attract foreign firms.

"Mining is an advantage. China has huge demand for minerals and is showing interest in the Philippines. It would be silly to ignore this," he said. "We are seeing all the right signals." Reuters



THE PHILIPPINES is trying to go beyond merely assembling semiconductors and other electronic exports and enter the high-value stage of designing and inventing electronics.

PNOC in talks with 3 firms on Palawan

By Abigail L. Ho

PHILIPPINE NATIONAL OIL CO. EXPLORATION Corp. (PNOC-EC) is currently negotiating with two foreign firms and one local company for possible farm-in agreements in two petroleum blocks off Palawan.

PNOC-EC president and chief executive Eduardo Manalac said the state firm was currently in talks with Australian firm TAP Oil Ltd. and Swedish company Lundin Oil Ltd. for a potential farm-in agreement in Service Contract 59 covering the West Balabac area.

"They're looking at the data. We're at the early stage of discussions with these firms," he said.

The state firm is also in discussions with Nido Petroleum Philippines Pty. Ltd. for another farm-in agreement, this time in SC 58 covering the West Calamian block.

Manalac said Nido Petroleum would likely have a 50-percent working interest in the petroleum block, should a farm-in agreement be finalized.

"Nido negotiations with PNOC for possible farm-in are well advanced," Nido Petroleum said in a presentation posted on its official website.

Nido Petroleum was "fine" with PNOC-EC, he said, as the two firms already had an existing partnership to develop a petroleum block in an area in Southwest Palawan that the Department of Energy had yet to formally award.

For this new petroleum block, which was included in the DOE's Philippine Energy Contracting Round 2005, the PNOC-EC and Nido Petroleum partnership was among the three groups given "priority consideration" due to its financial, legal and technical capabilities in developing the area.

Energy Undersecretary Guillermo Balce said in an earlier interview that the DOE should be ready to award the PNOC-Nido contract soon, maybe even this week.

Other groups given "priority consideration" were Burgundy Global Asset Management Corp. for an area in Northeast Palawan and another in Southeast Palawan and the partnership between Ranhill Bhd. and Phil-Mal Petroenergy Corp. for an area in the Sulu Sea basin.

ePLDT to buy ...

From page B1

compounded annual growth rate of 9.2 percent [over] the next four years," PLDT president Napoleon L. Nazareno said. "As the Philippines continues to gain recognition as a preferred location for BPO services, the PLDT group remains in the forefront as a partner in further developing this market in the years ahead."

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SPI's main business lines include content editorial and production, litigation support coding and electronic data discovery, medical transcription, database structuring and management and transaction processing.

On the other hand, ePLDT's Ventus call center group consists of Parlane Systems Inc., Vocativ Systems Inc. and ePLDT Ventus Inc. The ePLDT Ventus group operates six call center facilities located in Makati, Taguig, Pasig, Mandaluyong, Quezon City and Iloilo, rendering primarily voice-based services to US-based clients and outsourceers.

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RP posts \$89-M BOP surplus

By Doris C. Dumlaog

THE PHILIPPINES RECORDED A BALANCE of payment surplus of \$89 million in March, bringing up the first-quarter surplus to \$2.12 billion or more than double the surplus posted in the same period last year, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said yesterday.

The BOP surplus for the month of March, however, marked a slowdown from the \$107-million surplus seen in February.

The BOP measures the foreign exchange transactions between the domestic economy and the rest of the world.

Borrowings, exports and remittances are counted as surplus items, while payments for imports and debt servicing are considered deficit items.

The surplus in March means that more money came in than went out.

Since the start of the year, the country's BOP has been supported by the national government's increased foreign exchange deposits with BSP from its bond sales and project loans, the BSP's own foreign exchange operations, inflows from foreign private investments and overseas Filipino workers remittances.

The BOP surplus was also in line with the surge in the country's foreign exchange reserves to a record high of \$20.91 billion at end-April.

The BSR for its part, took advantage of the strong inflows by beefing up its gross international reserves.

The GIR—consisting of the BSP's gross foreign currency holdings, gold reserves, special drawing rights from the International Monetary Fund and foreign investments—indicates the country's ability to service foreign exchange requirements.

BOI drums up investor interest in the provinces

Nationwide roadshow kicks off in Cauayan, Isabela

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE BOARD OF INVESTMENTS HAS embarked on a nationwide roadshow to reach out to micro and small enterprises as the government steps up efforts to promote business activities and job creation in the provinces.

Trade Undersecretary Elmer C. Hernandez, who is also BOI managing head, said the campaign kicked off earlier this month in Cauayan, Isabela.

Hernandez said the BOI was able to process and approve incentives for a total of 12 projects based in Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya and Cagayan worth a combined P183 million.

Expected to create 170 new jobs, the projects cover the sector of agromarine and forest-based products, information and communication technology services, tourism, and health and wellness.

The biggest of the projects in terms of cost and jobs are the medical facilities of the Santiago City-based De Vera's Medical Center and Renmar Drugs & Hospital Supplies, worth P29 million and P26 million, respectively.

De Vera's project is expected to create 38 jobs while Renmar would open up 27 jobs.

On the other hand, Teodorico P. Padilla's P79.25-million food and agricultural products terminal would open up only 10 jobs.

"Since the system for attracting foreign investments into the country is well in place, it is now the time to gear our efforts toward investment promotions in the regions," he explained.

The official said the approval of the projects was fast-tracked following the streamlining of the application process under the so-called one-day registration scheme.

Hernandez added that certain requirements were relaxed to allow micro and small-sized businesses to qualify for fiscal incentives, which include tax holidays and duty-free importation of capital equipment.

The government classifies businesses with assets worth up to P3 million as micro enterprises and those with between P3 million and P15 million as small.

"(For this campaign), businesses need not be involved in the export market," Hernandez said. "Applicants need only to be engaged in the priority sectors listed in the Investment Priorities Plan."

The 11 investment areas include agri-business; healthcare and well-

ness products and services; information and communications technology; electronics; motor vehicle products; energy; infrastructure; tourism; shipbuilding/shipping; jewelry; and fashion garments.

Aside from these preferred activities, other areas included in the IPP are specifically required under existing laws.

Covered by mandatory inclusion are industrial tree plantations; iron and steel projects; exploration, mining, quarrying and processing of minerals; publication or printing of books or textbooks; and refining, storage, marketing and distribution of petroleum products.

Moreover, the IPP covers activities involved in the ecological solid waste management; the provision of clean water; those covered in bilateral agreements; and those involving the rehabilitation, self-development and self-reliance of disabled persons.

Further, Hernandez said the BOI now allows that the pre-registration requirement of publishing a notice of application be done through a local gazette or regional newspaper or through bulletin boards in municipal, provincial or city halls instead of a national publication with general circulation.

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NTC set to lift ban on spam

By Daxim L. Lucas

TELECOMMUNICATIONS REGULATORS MAY lift the moratorium on commercial text messages being broadcast over cellular phone networks by next month after it managed to iron out the most contentious issues with mobile phone firms and their content providers.

In an interview, National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) chief Ronald O. Solis said a finalized memorandum circular governing the use of so-called "text spam" may be released as early as next week.

"We will lift [the ban] once we issue the revised circular," he said, adding that he did not want any further delays that would affect legitimate commerce in the sector.

Solis explained that the new rules would distribute the burden of regulating text spam equally between mobile phone firms and their external content providers to eliminate finger-pointing between the two groups.

"We are pressuring them both to comply," he said.

Mounting complaints

To date, the NTC has received close to a thousand complaints from the public because of the text spam.

Many complainants claim that they are billed for receiving unsolicited text messages and commercial broadcasts, while some complain of the inconvenience of receiving these messages, many of which are sent late at night.

When confronted with these issues by regulators, telecommunications firms often point to their third-party content providers as the culprits behind the "violations."

Under the new rules, Solis said that content providers found violating the text spam guidelines may be blacklisted or suspended by regulators.

At worst, they will be permanently barred from doing business within the telecommunications system in the future.

"Telecommunications firms, on the other hand, will be penalized," the NTC chief said, although he added that the proposed penalty structure is still being finalized.

The remaining issue that needs to be ironed out is the hotline number which the NTC will set up jointly with the telecommunications firms to receive complaints from the public.

Universal number

On top of being a complaints hotline, the universal phone number will also be made available to members of the public who may want to verify the veracity of suspected "text scams" sent to them via their mobile phones.

Users will pay a small fee to access to the hotline number and the revenues from this operation will be shared proportionally between the regulator and the telecommunications firms.

Solis said that the fee is not meant to help the NTC make money but only to cover the administrative expenses of running a hotline operation.

Despite the fact that kinks in the hotline system have yet to be ironed out, Solis said he plans to release the revised rules by next week.

"I don't want this to be delayed only because of the hotline issue," he said. "We can provide a temporary hotline for complaints."

2006

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Celebrate summer with Gusto!

GUSTO!, THE SHOPWISE GUIDE TO living life to the fullest, goes on a fun-filled summer vacation with its third issue, Summer Fun. With no less than the wave-riding modern hero Jericho Rosales gracing the cover, Shopwise members will soon be flocking to the country's best hypermart - as awarded by the Department of Trade and Industry and the Philippine Retailers' Association in the recently held 2005 Outstanding Filipino Retailer ceremony to get their latest issue of Gusto!

The magazine contains all the summer essentials, and more. For home-made ice-cream, sherbet and other exotic shakes, check out Summer Nectar for easy do-it-yourself recipes. Plan for an enjoyable road trip or vacation ahead with the food, lifestyle and fashion feature, Beach Bonding. And if the kids start asking the dreaded "Are we there yet?" question, don't fret, because the magazine has included a "Toys for Trip-pin" guide for tiny tots, and youthful adults alike.

Planning a romantic picnic away from the city? Get some pointers from Sweet Summer Picnic for charming themed getaways for you and your lover to try.

Go nuts over the magical properties



of the coconut in Coco Loco, and explore sensuous body oil moisturizers in Shine On. Also, witness a hot mama bikini designer get an invigorating hair and makeup makeover that made her feel ten years younger in A New Hue.

Gusto! also takes reinvention a step further with Royal Highness, a princess-cut room makeover even a commoner could pull off. And if you want to get into better shape, why not get out of the gym and into intense outdoor sports like

underwater hockey (The Sport Down Under). For a low-impact summer activity, Gusto! recommends shaking your booty in an exquisite belly dance (Unleashing the Inner Goddess). Both activities are sure to lead to a fitter and more confident you.

Gusto! is also wired to the best entertainment and technology offerings. From relaxing summer sounds and classic summer movies, Gusto! has the low-down on the funniest play of the year, ZsaZsa Zaturmah ze Musical, and is hip to Nokia's gorgeous L'Amour collection and iPod trends.

As every happy Shopwise member knows, summer fun is best spent with Gusto!

Gusto! is free to all Shopwise Wise-club members. Shopwise is located at Shopwise is located at the ground floor of the Harrison Plaza Mall, Manila, along the main thoroughfare of M.L. Quezon Avenue cor. Circumferential Road in Antipolo City, at the ground floor of the Festival Supermall in Alabang, at the corner of Pasong Tamo and Vito Cruz Sts. in Makati, along E. Rodriguez Sr. Ave., Bagumbayan, Libis, and at the corner of General Aguinaldo and McArthur Avenues in Araneta Center, Cubao, Quezon City.



NATIONWIDE OBSERVANCE OF WORLD TELECOMMUNICATION DAY

In accordance with the mandate of the United Nations and its specialized agency for telecommunications and information and communication technologies (ICT), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the Philippine government represented by the Commission on Information and Communication Technology (CICT) and the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) joined the private sector of the Philippine telecommunications and ICT industry in observing the 2006 World Telecommunication Day last May 12, and the National Electronics and Telecommunications Week from May 15 to 20. The week-long celebration was highlighted by a two-day conference and workshops with the theme of MMX Digital for all Filipinos recently held at the Dusit Hotel Nikko. Photo was taken after the speech of the

event's guest of honor and speaker, Representative Simeon Kintanar of Cebu, who was NTC Commissioner for 5 years before he was elected to Congress. Shown are (from left): Damian Domingo Mapa, Commissioner, CICT, Rep. Kintanar, NTC Commissioner Ronald Olivar Solis, Renato Garcia, president, Philippine Electronics and Telecommunications Federation (Petef), Telecommunications Office Head and CICT Commissioner Francisco Perez II, Cesar Castro, president and principal consultant, CD Castro Consultancy Inc., engineer Epitacio Marquez, chair, Philippine Chamber of Telecommunications Operators (PCTO), and NTC Deputy Commissioner Jorge Sarmiento. Not in photo is CICT Chair Ramon Sales who delivered the Keynote Speech but had to leave immediately after the morning session of the conference.

Real Bank launches 'Tulong sa Kabataan' ATM Card

MARKING ITS 30TH ANNIVERSARY celebration this year, The Real Bank, a fast growing thrift bank in the country, launches the first ever ATM card that helps advocate nation building.

Real Cash - "Tulong sa Kabataan" ATM account is not like any other ATM account. The card design features the winning art piece of Kenneth Domalanta, a grade school student of Doña Juana Elementary School in Quezon City, who won first place in the "Bata... Bata... Magsinop, Magpinta" 2005 Art contest NCR Category B (For Grades 4 to 6 students).

A client who opens a Real Cash "Tulong sa Kabataan" ATM account in any of the 24 Real Bank branches located in the areas of Quezon City, San Juan, Makati, Bulacan, Rizal, Laguna, Cavite and Batangas effectively becomes a partner in nation building as the Bank do-

nates an additional peso on client's behalf to the "Bata... Bata... Magimpok at Magsinop" Savings Advocacy Campaign, a project that was launched in July 2004 with the Department of Education as partner.

The Real Bank started the savings advocacy campaign during its 28th anniversary in 2004 with the strong belief that teaching the kids the value of saving, thriftiness and the wise use of resources will help grow into better citizens that will ultimately contribute to nation-building.

Now, two years after, the project has become very popular and was well accepted and recognized as it earned awards from the Asian Banking Awards 2005, the 2005 National Consumers Quality Awards and the Global Excellence Award 2005. The Real Bank saw it fit that clients become active partners in this worthy advocacy.



MAGNIFICAT VENTURES' TOPPING OFF CEREMONY

Magnificat Ventures Corp held the Topping Off Ceremonies of the Shrine of St. Therese of the Child Jesus, the envisioned 'Center of Devotion' in Asia to the Saint last March 25, at Manlunas St., Villamor Air Base, Pasay City. The ceremonies was led by the following top executives of the project (from left): Oel Razon, VP sales of MVC; Conrado Goco, VP and general manager of

POC (Pacific-Orient Consultants & Management Company Inc); Fr. Ernie Biluan of the Military Ordinariate of the Philippines; Rafael 'Boydee' Dizon III, president of MVC; Remy Tolentino, chair/president of Ross Systems Int'l Inc; Ric Alcantara, construction manager of POC and Mario Martinez, VP marketing of MVC. The shrine's grand opening is tentatively scheduled in July 2006.

IDP EDUCATION AUSTRALIA RECOGNITION AWARD



Warren Hill, lecturer in Engineering Computing, senior international officer of Charles Darwin University recognizes Amber Favis, Charles Darwin University Awardee, for her Outstanding Academic Achievement in Best Master Engineering Management. At right is Andrew King, director of IDP Education Australia Philippines.

AMWSLAI COURTESY CALL AT BSP

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) Governor and Chair of the Monetary Board Amador M. Tetangco, Jr. (second from left) views the Sandigan News Bulletin of the Air Materiel Wing Savings and Loan Association Inc (AMWSLAI) as its Chair Retired Col. Ricardo L. Nolasco Jr. (right) explains the reforms being implemented by the new AMWSLAI Board of Trustees to further improve its services. Also present during the AMWSLAI courtesy call

at the BSP are (from left): BSP Ma. Corazon J. Guerrero, BSP Supervision and Examination Department III Director Fernando B. Caballa, DZRH's Malou Cabral, and AMWSLAI President and Chief Executive Officer Col. Carlyzar S. Divinagracia. AMWSLAI is the second largest non-stock savings and loan association in the Philippines with over P15 billion in resources and 34 branches all over the country to serve its more than 230,000 members nationwide.

HOME MASTERCARD IN MERALCO'S 103RD YEAR

Part of the launch initiatives of the newest co-brand credit card in the market, Home MasterCard participates as one of the sponsors in the week-long 103rd Anniversary and Employee Week Celebration of Meralco. Home MasterCard had set up for one week a special selling booth for Meralco employees and their visitors at the SM Appliance Exhibit held at the main lobby of the Lopez Building. Shown in center of photo with his son is one of the shoppers at the exhibit - Manolo Fernando Sr., AVP and assistant treasurer of Meral-



co, being eagerly welcomed by Rolando Tanchanco, BDO consumer lending group executive vice president (extreme left) and David Fernando, Meralco financial services general manager (extreme right).

MOZCOM LAUNCHES NEW CORPORATE LOGO

Some call it rebirth or re-imaging, but for commercial ISP Mozcom, its new corporate logo design and name lifted from Mosaic Communications (MosCom), are mere signs of the unceasing commitment to continuously unravel the realm of technological advancement. The recent launch of its new corporate logo embodies Mozcom's dynamic character. From its conventional and monochromatic green logo design in 1994, it has now changed to a curvy and trendy design in hues of blue and



green. This evolution of logos reflects the dynamism of Mozcom in adapting technologies to market that will meet the requirements of its customers. Photo shows Jill Legaspi, marketing executive, presenting the new Mozcom corporate logo.

Campaign for responsible dieting

INDULGE. EAT. CHEW. SWALLOW... Indulge. Dream of the luscious, creamy and mouth watering mozzarella cheese of pizza in your mouth... What about dreaming of a savory, sumptuous meal? But what about the unwanted bulges on your belly dangling like kangaroo pockets? Or should you starve yourself to death?

Serious diet goes hand in hand with big responsibility and determination to really achieve the ideal weight you want. If it is not taken seriously, one is unconsciously and seriously putting herself/himself in danger of life long diseases that is very expensive to maintain.

One usually go through the most common problem that occurs right after gobbling packs of pills that over-promise to give you a perfect JLO body. "Weight rebound" can make one gain back the previous weight to as much as 5-10 lbs or could even gain twice the previous weight.

The time of self prescribed, over the counter slimming pills and south

beach diet is over. St. Carlos Pharma Int'l Inc offers the very first weight management program here in the Philippines which advocates responsible dieting. Originating from Thailand, it flew its way to Switzerland, Russia and now, the Philippines. Over 200 doctors nationwide through its affiliated hospitals and clinics are recommending it not for vanity purposes but for prevention of long term sicknesses such as diabetes, liver damage, stroke, cardiac arrest, heart disease and hypertension. The medically supervised treatment boasts of safety and effectiveness due to its weight trimming and stabilization periods where the ideal weight is maintained.

This Weight Management Program is a combination of traditional Asian herbs and modern pharmaceutical components that effectively cleanse the body and burn off unwanted fats. For inquiries about the MediSlim program, consult with your nearest doctor, call 687-9152/53 or e-mail medislilm@scarlos.com.

Fitness First Southmall opens soon

THE NO. 1 GLOBAL FITNESS company will soon open its thirteenth club in the Philippines. The new club will be located at the 3rd floor of SM Southmall Las Piñas and is bound to invigorate the fitness scene in the South.

Fitness First offers the best facilities, from the cardio theatre, to the group exercise studios, to the latest strength training, core and cardio equipment, luxurious change rooms, sauna and steam. The new club also boasts of the Cinefit, where one can watch a movie while doing a cardio workout; and the Cycling Studio which features spin classes like Cosmic Cycling and RPM. It will also have a Mind and Body Studio, a relaxing venue for Yoga, Pilates and Body Balance classes.

After an energizing workout, one can visit Body Care, a world-

class health and beauty haven blending Western Spa experience with a Cosmopolitan Asian Flavor. Body care offers a full range of beauty and massage treatments including facials, aromatherapy, body wraps, slimming treatments and hand/foot therapy to complete a blissful experience.

Fitness First offers a Passport membership which allows access to over 400 clubs in Asia, Australia and Europe. You can also check out the website at www.fitness-first.com.ph for more information on its clubs in Alabang, Greenhills, ABS-CBN, Fairview, Fort Bonifacio, RSC-Makati, Eastwood City, Robinsons Metro East, Ayala Center Cebu, Ortigas, Manila and Fitness First Plus at RCB Plaza. To reserve a pioneer membership at Fitness First Southmall, you may call 805-1000.



URC: TEAZZ AT THE BEACH

The long, hot summer brought everyone out to the country's foremost beach, Boracay, in droves. One scintillating event on the world-famous beach over Easter vacation was the launch of URC's Teazz - The Green Tea with a Fizz. With its many flavors of healthful tea drinks like cola, cola lite, lemon and raspberry, Teazz is the latest line of refreshing beverages brought to

us by the makers of C2 and is a perfect way to cool down in the torrid temperatures of summer. The Teazz Summer Fun Slam Challenge was a series of cool activities held right on the beach to celebrate the launch. URC bigwigs Lance Gokongwei and Edwin Tolante, along with media and showbiz celebrities and a bevy of beautiful people attended the scintillating event.



SASN celebrates 4th year

ST. AUGUSTINE SCHOOL OF NURSING, IS CELEBRATING its 4th anniversary this May and one way of thanking its supporters is by giving away as much as 25 percent discount on all tuition fees. As a fitting tribute to its anniversary, SASN will conduct its commencement exercises on May 31 at the PICC Plenary Hall, Pasay City. Over 1000 graduates of the different allied courses from NCR and Luzon campuses will attend this grand event. While provincial graduation ceremonies will take place simultaneously until June, SASN offers courses on Caregiving, Practical Nursing, Nursing Aide, and Medical Transcription and has 188 branches nationwide. For more information, call 373-3901 up to 08 locals 8321 and 8277.

PRSP professional development seminar

'LEARN FROM THE MASTERS: COMMUNICATING IN TOUGH TIMES,' A SEMINAR conducted by the Public Relations Society of the Philippines (PRSP) will be held on Wednesday, June 7, at the GMA Network Center, Timog Avenue corner Edsa, Quezon City from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Registration is on going. Details about the seminar can be accessed at the www.prsp.ph. You can also call the PRSP Secretariat at 638-0010/638-0012 or e-mail at prsp@prsp.ph / prsp04@yahoo.com. Masters with proven track records in PR and related fields will share actual cases they handled and their experiences, insights and practical tips on effective communications and PR strategies. Early registrants gets 25 percent discount.

Friendly digi-offers at Automatic Centre

BPI EXPRESS CREDIT JOINS AUTOMATIC CENTRE AND SOGO HOME & OFFICE Center this season to dish out a fun-filled and exciting promo exclusively for BPI Express Credit cardholders - the first ever 1% Instant Rebate. Designed to draw in eager shoppers who may want to experience ultimate and reasonable shopping experience this season, the promo is expected to be a big hit with both techno-savvy and digital-inspired users with AC and Sogo's impressive line-up of state-of-the-art gadget brands. Shop now and join Automatic Centre and Sogo's great deals and discover the best value for your money. You'll definitely find everything you need all in one place. For details, please call 750-3316, 758-2552 or 251-0381.

AIM's Pre-MBA slated on June 5 to 23

AIM'S - WASHINGTON SYCIP GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS WILL HOLD its Pre-MBA Program on June 5 to 23, at the AIM Campus. It is a three-week, highly intensive simulation course designed for enrollees of AIM's full-time MBA. The Pre-MBA is now open to professionals and entrepreneurs from all fields. It is also open to those without a background in business. Participants will undergo fifteen eight-hour days of rigorous study and interactive class discussions, complete with full-blown case studies and group projects. Classes will be handled by some of AIM's top professors with decades of professional and academic experience. For more information on the Pre-MBA and other management degree programs of AIM, please call Edythe Bautista at 894-0043 or 892-4011 ext. 209, 231, and 255.



Republic of the Philippines
National Transmission Corporation
Section I.

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

Supply, Delivery and Commissioning of Primary DCV,
Resistance Standard, Reference Multi-Meter and
Thermo-Hygrometer

(Reference No.: PB060322-EL0039)

- The National Transmission Corporation, Head Office Region (TRANSCO-HO) through the CY2006 Corporate Budget approved by the TRANSCO Board, intends to apply the sum of P6,700,000.00 being the Total Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Supply, Delivery and Commissioning of Primary DCV, Resistance Standard, Reference Multi-Meter and Thermo-Hygrometer. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
- The TRANSCO-HO now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for Primary DCV, Delivery of the GOODS is required within sixty (60) calendar days from receipt of approved Purchase Order. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.
- Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
- A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders, starting May 19, 2006 to June 22, 2006 from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. at the address below and upon payment of a non refundable fee in the amount of *One Thousand Pesos (P1,000.00)*. The method of payment will be CASH. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
- The TRANSCO-HO will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on June 8, 2006 at 2:00 P.M. at same address below. Requests for clarifications on the bid documents should be submitted before the Pre-Bid Conference.
- Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before 2:00 P.M. of June 23, 2006. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in any of the following form and amount:

Form of Security	Amount
1. Cash, certified check, cashier's check, manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit (1% of ABC)	Php 67,000.00
2. Bank guarantee (1.5% of ABC)	Php 100,500.00
3. Surety bond (2.5% of ABC)	Php 167,500.00
4. Foreign government guarantee (100% of ABC)	Php 6,700,000.00

or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late bids shall not be accepted.

- Bid opening shall be on June 23, 2006 / 2:00 P.M. at the Admin Conference Rm. same address below. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.
- The National Transmission Corporation reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

National Transmission Corporation, Head Office Region
Mr. Armando N. Ochoa, BAC Chairman
MMD Office, G/F TransCo Main Bldg.
Power Center, Quezon Ave. corner BIR Road
Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. No. (632) 9812235 / Fax No. (632) 9228432
Website: www.transco.ph

(Sgd.) ARMANDO N. OCHOA
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - May 20 & 27, 2006)

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Burgos Street, Makati City. Tel. 897-23-70.
Ask for Dieter Nuss, Saturday and Sunday only, tel. #09159018429 or e-mail to dieternuss@yahoo.com



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HOME GUARANTY CORPORATION

NOTICE OF SALE

Please be informed that the following properties of the Home Guaranty Corporation are being offered for Sale

PROPERTY LOCATION	TYPE	FA	LA	SELLING PRICE	REMARKS
CAVITE					
1 B11 L4 Mariner Lane, Regalia Classic IIB, Anabu 2-B, Imus	RH	36	50	278,300.00	TCT for consolidation-vacant
2 B3 L14 Gondola Road, Regalia Classics III, Anabu 2-B, Imus	TH	41	35	247,500.00	TCT for consolidation/occupied
3 B7 L58 Mary Cris Homes Ph. 2, Bucandala, Imus	RH	20	40	192,500.00	TCT for consolidation-vacant
4 B7 L28 Alfonso Village, Alapan 1-B, Imus	TH	48	38	267,080.00	TCT for consolidation-vacant
5 B9 L28 Alfonso Village, Alapan 1-B, Imus	TH	54	38	274,780.00	TCT for consolidation/occupied
6 B10 L39 Alfonso Village, Alapan 1-B, Imus	TH	40	38	213,180.00	TCT for consolidation-vacant
7 B13 L27 Alfonso Village, Alapan 1-B, Imus	TH	40	38	199,980.00	TCT for consolidation/occupied
8 B8 L38 Uranus St., Armstrong Village, Paliparan, Dasmariñas	RH	25	38	138,600.00	vacant
9 B70 L25 Cityhomes Resorville, Lantaca, Dasmariñas	SA	36	135	536,121.56	vacant
10 B59 L30 Cityhomes Resorville Ph. 2, Lantaca, Dasmariñas	RH	24	38	159,500.00	vacant
11 B8 L19 Sardonyx St., Cityhomes Resorville Ph. 4, Lantaca, Dasmariñas	RH	54	57	283,360.00	TCT for consolidation/occupied
12 B54 L28 Cityhomes Resorville, Lantaca, Dasmariñas		30	47.5	258,500.00	TCT for consolidation-vacant
LAGUNA					
10 B21 L10 Palusapis St., Alfonso Homes 1, Sta. Rosa	TH	84	54	641,300.00	TCT for consolidation-vacant
11 B11 L11 Narra Street, Mahogany Village 1, Cabuyao	RH	40	40	528,000.00	TCT for consolidation-occupied

FOR INQUIRIES, PLEASE CALL HOME GUARANTY CORPORATION AT 896-04-25, 897-31-49
OR VISIT OUR OFFICE AT THE 4TH FLOOR JADE BLDG., 335 GIL PUYAT AVE. MAKATI CITY

(Sgd.) RAFAEL P. DELOS SANTOS
OIC, VICE PRESIDENT
PROJECT MANAGEMENT/ACQUIRED
ASSETS DISPOSITION GROUP

(PDI - May 27, 2006)

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(at the back of Chinese Embassy,
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CPSP holds 2nd general membership meeting

THE CORPORATE PLANNING SOCIETY OF THE PHILIPPINES (CPSP) HELD its 2nd Quarterly General Membership Meeting last March 23, 2006. It was held at the Executive Business Center, Luzon Room, 5th Floor of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Building. This quarter's meeting had Mr. Peter Wallace, President of The Wallace Business Forum, AYC Consultants, Inc. as the guest speaker. Mr. Wallace, who has been conducting economic, political and business analysis for Chief Executives of multinational and major Filipino companies, shared his insights on the current significant events in the country. CPSP members (corporate & individual) were treated in this event with free lunch, networking opportunity, and a chance to engage in a discussion of current issues with fellow strategists.

More employment opportunities in today's JOB MARKET.



OBITUARIES

LUZ ORTEZA ROTAECHE GARCIA

(November 8, 1927 - May 18, 2006)

Of Magallanes, Sorsogon, Sorsogon City and Everett, Washington, USA

Peacefully joined her Creator and
beloved husband Reinerio Trijo Garcia on May 18, 2006.

Her bereaved children Thomas and Rosemarie Vickers, Silverio and Yolanda Garcia, Dr. Tito Rotaeche Garcia, Ma. Luz and Marion Casino, Reinerio Jr. and Marilyn Garcia, Ma. Cristina and Roberto Vergara (+), Maritoni and Noel Hernandez, Benito and Dolor Garcia, and Vincent Paul and Beverly Garcia; grandchildren Tom-Tom and Dawn, Kooky and Gilbert, Michael and Bilrks, Baby Cake, Vic-Vic, Mark, Steve and Gall, Mario, Alfred, Madee, Noel, Marityl and Amang, Anamarie, Rainier, Paolo, Christian, Christopher, Kristella and Jett, Katrina, Em Em, Mic-Mic, Marie, Mico, Rene Boy, Wolf and Gabby; great grandchildren Vincent, Mika, Myco, Tomasito, Isalah, Claire, Caitlin, Celine, Clarisse and Shen; brother Jose (+), sisters Filipina Brotamonte and Violeta Armada; sister-in-law Sylvia A. Rotaeche (+); brothers-in-law Atty. Paterno Brotamonte and Titok Armada (+), request friends, relatives and pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Solle Funeral Home 3301 Colby Avenue, Everett, Washington, USA where daily masses and novenas will be heard until May 28, 2006. Cremation will follow the requiem mass on May 29, 2006. Her ashes will be laid to rest at the Manila Memorial Park.

Daily masses will be offered at the following Churches until May 28, 2006

Saint Mary Magdalens Everett, Washington
Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul Sorsogon City
Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima Sorsogon City
Parish of Magallanes Magallanes, Sorsogon
Cathedral of the Parish of St. Andrew Paranaque City
Mt. Carmel New Manila, Quezon City
St. John The Baptist Pinaglabanan, San Juan
Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Cebu City
Nuestra Señora de Aranzazu San Mateo, Rizal

OBITUARIES

In Loving Memory

On the 90th Birth Anniversary of

RAFAEL "PAING" VILLAREAL MARTINEZ

of Mambusao, Capiz

May 29, 1916 - March 18, 2006

On the 81st Birth Anniversary of

CONSOLIDACION "INDAY" MORALES MARTINEZ

of Altavas, Aklan

May 22, 1925 - November 17, 2004

Mass will be offered at the Manila Metropolitan Cathedral-Basilica
Intramuros, Manila on Monday, May 29, 2006, 12:10 p.m.

RAY R. MEDINA and MILA CORTEZ MEDINA

of Masinloc, Zambales

Passed away on May 21, 2006

Their loving brothers, sisters, children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, friends and relatives request the pious readers to pray for their untimely demise.

Interment will be on Sunday, May 28, 2006 at THE COLUMBARY,
Visayas Avenue, Quezon City at 3:00 p.m.

Our Dearly Beloved

MAGDALENA LEONARDO SANTOS

June 3, 1917 - May 24, 2006

(widow of the late Dr. Enoc C. Santos)

Peacefully joined our Creator on May 24, 2006 at the age of 89.

Her children Ex-Mayor Leonardo "Baby" (+), Natividad S. Suarez, Lamberto "Bambi" (+), Teresita S. Hizon, Joey, Eddie, Dave, Enoc Jr. "Jayjay" and Ma. Magdalena S. Tiongson; in-laws; grandchildren; great grandchildren; brother & sisters; nephews & nieces, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the family residence at Paltao, Pulilan, Bulacan.

Interment will be on Sunday, May 28, 2006 at the Garden of Love Memorial Park after the 1:00 pm Mass at the Pulilan Catholic Church.

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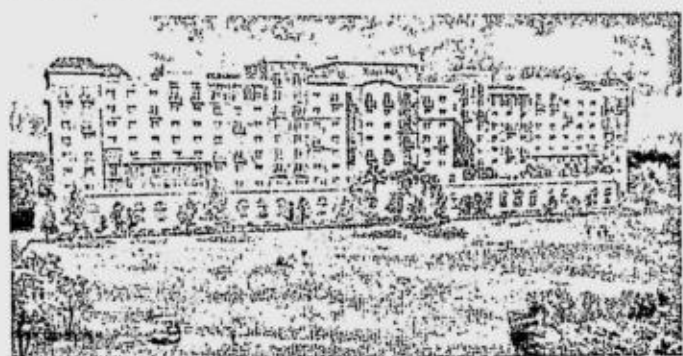
Sarasota

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a modern Fitness Center...



The whole family will enjoy hours of healthy recreation with first-rate amenities including a gym, adult and children's swimming pools, tennis and badminton courts and landscaped play areas.

the Villamor Golf Course...



A championship-level playground for golf aficionados. Tee off in the 60-hectare, 18-hole, par-72 green. Non-golfers can enjoy front-row views of the sprawling landscape.

a luxurious indoor Spa...

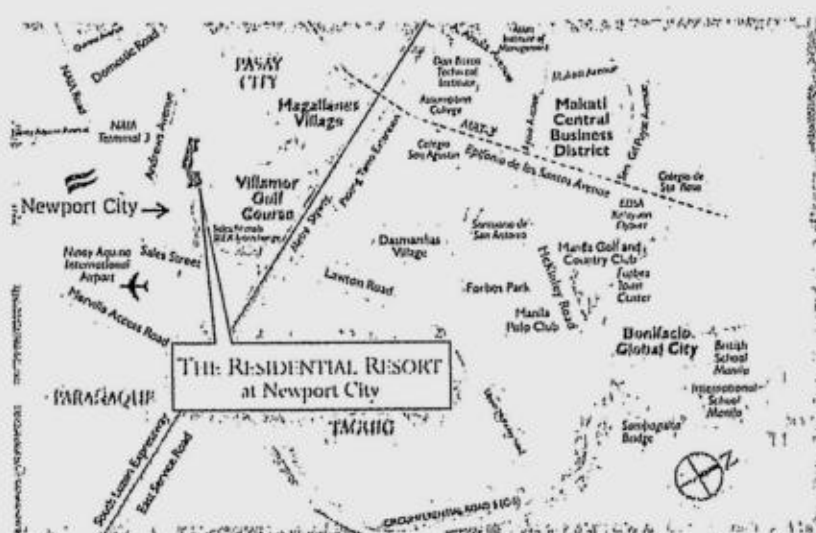
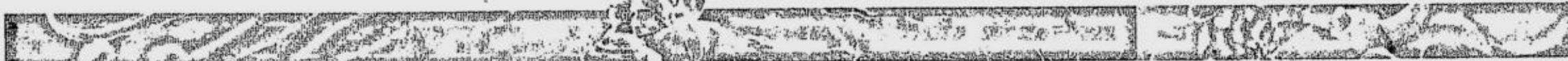


Where you can unwind amid top-notch therapeutic facilities, heat and exercise pools and aromatherapy and massage rooms.

and a themed Dining, Shopping and Entertainment Complex.



Explore a streetscape of international restaurants, stylish boutiques and alfresco cafés with live performances—all within walking distance from home.



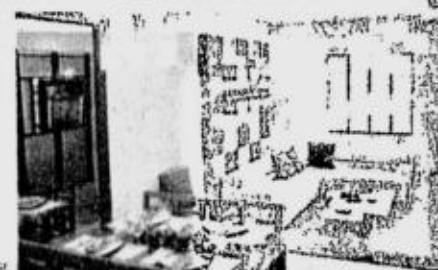
At Sarasota, discover the privileges of living close to nature in a Mediterranean-style resort setting inspired by Lake Las Vegas. Choose from an executive studio, 1-bedroom or 2-bedroom home, with wide windows and balconies.

The elegant, earth-toned residential buildings are no more than 9 stories high, so air can flow freely. Each building boasts its own lobby and ample basement parking. Aside from a guarded entrance gate, a tree-lined perimeter fence encloses the entire community. The interior roads are wide and made safe for children.

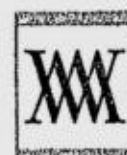
And the homes are clustered around the play amenities, making it easy for neighbors to get together at the lap pool, putting green, fitness station or tennis court. Or at the sitting area and the aviary with benches. Children, too, will enjoy hours of fun in their own pool and play areas.

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PROPERTY

2015 PROJECTION

Retirement villages to earn \$40B, generate 4M jobs

By Tessa R. Salazar

A DRAMATIC SHIFT IN selected countries' demographics in the near future could bring in at least 859,000 foreign retiree arrivals to the Philippines. That number represents less than one percent of the 869.1 million projected retirees the developed world will produce between 2006 and 2015.

Foreseeing nearly a billion retirees looking for a place to spend the rest of their lives, the local retirement industry, especially property developers, are being urged to prepare for at least nearly a million retirees from Korea, Japan, China, Taiwan, the United States, Canada and other European countries and even former Filipinos or "balikbayans" with dual citizenships looking forward to spend the twilight of their lives back to their homeland.

Housing demand

The main participant, which is the real estate industry, is projected to have 859,000 housing demand either lease or purchase for the next 10 years.

The retirement industry is projected to hit the target foreign exchange receipts at a cumulative \$40 billion, with 4 million jobs generated by 2015, making the Philippines a major retirement haven in Southeast Asia for foreigners.

"We don't have a retirement industry

right now. SHDA (Subdivision and Housing Developers Association) is spearheading the creation of the industry. If we'll not work as a team, we cannot compete with Thailand and Malaysia—two of the main destinations of retirees," said Noel Gonzales, summit chair and director of the Philippine Retirement Industry. PRI is a private sector organization composed of real estate, health care and lifestyle group.

Industry blueprint

He added that the summit for the retirement industry culminating on July 3 in Shangri-La Makati will create a blueprint for the retirement industry.

Government agency Philippine Retirement Authority and private entity PRI revealed that the other infrastructure necessary for the influx of the retiree market are health and insurance facilities (24-hour clinics, hospitals, air-lift ambulance services); 24-hour security arrangements; and recreational, cultural and educational and travel/transportation services.

All these infrastructure and services, the two agencies said, could be integrated into a so-called "retirement village" so that members would have easier access to such services and facilities.

Gen. Edgardo Aglipay, chair of the PRA and Gonzales are scheduled to present plans for the retirement industry to President Macapagal-Arroyo on Tuesday.

Big 5 developers

Ernesto Ordoñez, incoming presi-

dent of the PRI, revealed that initially his group has already united the "Big 5" property developers—Gotianun, Gokongwei, Sy, Ayala and Tan—to be part of the group.

Aglipay stressed that the first wave of retirees coming to the Philippines is crucial for the country's subsequent success in the retirement industry. Thus, he said, it would be necessary to get the support of big names that have the reputation, experience and capability to produce what are needed for the retirement communities.

"They have the condominiums, hospitals, banks, almost everything that a retirement industry needs. It's just integrating what they have to be able to provide the total retirement services," he said.

Retirement 'hotspots'

Prospective retirement "hotspots" have been identified in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. These include Metro Clark, Metro Subic, Baguio, Tagaytay, Batangas, Laguna, Cavite, Cebu, Bohol, Bacolod, Palawan, Davao and Cagayan de Oro.

Gonzales revealed that the reasons for the demographic shift favoring the

Philippines include pension payment increases in developed countries amounting \$1,000 to \$1,500 per individual would be insufficient to live on in such countries; family support systems for older people are eroding because of smaller families and a highly mobile population; and the inevitability of mass migration.

Another objective that the groups hope to achieve is the reverse migration of Filipino caregivers.

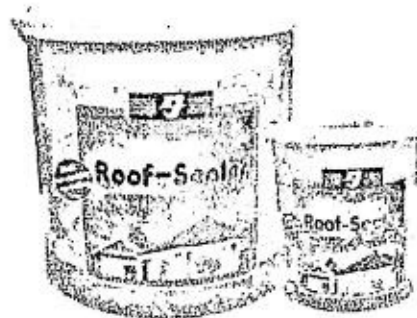
By 2025, the number of people aged 60 and over will be highest in Japan, Italy and Germany.

120-ha. retirement village

Meanwhile, a retirement village in Bantay, Ilocos Sur, is in the drawing boards as revealed recently by Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis Chavit Singson to the INQUIRER.

Over 120 hectares of rolling hills in Bantay, a town near Vigan, have already been surveyed.

"It will be retirement homes for different nationalities like Koreans, Germans and Taiwanese. And then right at the center of the community would be mall facilities—movie houses and supermarkets," Singson said.



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Renewable energy

MOST, IF NOT ALL, COUNTRIES CURRENTLY rely on fossil fuels such as coal, oil and natural gas for their energy. Fossil fuels are nonrenewable, which means they are retrieved from limited sources that are running out and becoming too expensive or environmentally damaging to extract.

The most widely used of these fossil fuels would have to be oil, which is a derivative of petroleum. Petroleum is a complex substance formed beneath the earth's surface over centuries of many different materials' being subjected to decay, intense heat and very high pressure. This petroleum is then refined to break it down into its many usable components, such as oil, plastics and asphalt. At the rate of human consumption of oil, however, the supplies of petroleum underground are rapidly nearing depletion. This is partly why oil prices are always going up: it is because the supply is decreasing while demand is increasing.

Coupled with its scarcity, the extraction and burning of fossil fuels contribute to global warming. In fact, fossil fuel-fired electricity generation is the single greatest source of air pollution in countries like the United States. Power plants are the leading source of carbon dioxide emissions, a primary contributor to global warming. Burning fossil fuels may also cause cancer and other chronic health problems. Their use degrades the valuable land and water resources from which they are extracted.

Renewable energy

Faced with an impending scarcity of oil, the world is now turning—too slow, many experts believe—to the technologies and scientific developments that produce energy without the use of fossil fuels. This energy is called renewable energy which is any form of energy produced and rapidly replaced by natural processes. It is therefore sustainable and will never run out.

Benefits

Other than the primary benefit of renewable energy which is its practically unlimited supply, there are other advantages to be gained by switching over from the fossil fuels.

Renewable energy is cost-effective. After making a substantial initial investment on technology that produces renewable energy, electricity costs will be cheaper in the long run.

Renewable energy forms

Fossil fuels need to be burned in order to produce energy. This causes harmful emissions and pollution that renewable energy sources do not produce. Instead, they usually involve natural processes occurring in nature such as water plunging down a waterfall and ocean's waves pushing toward the land. Here are some forms of renewable energy:

• Wind energy

The sun heats the earth but this heat is not distributed evenly over the planet. This causes

temperature and pressure differences which makes air move in the direction of lower pressure, and this is what we call wind.

Wind energy can be stored through the use of wind turbines. Wind turbines have sails connected to a rotating shaft in such a way that when the wind blows, the sails turn. The sails' movement then makes the shaft turn and this motion generates mechanical energy that can be transformed into electrical power. This form of renewable energy is quickly gaining acceptance around the world. Wind turbines are placed in windy areas, so that energy can be generated without the use of fossil fuels, and this also increases the value of idle land.

• Water energy

Water energy is roughly a thousand times heavier than air. If the wind can rotate turbines, then so can water, if placed in the right location.

There are many forms of water energy, but most of them use the natural movement of water, such as the tides, waves in the ocean and waterfalls just like in our Maria Cristina Falls in Iligan.

• Solar energy

The sun's heat can be absorbed by photovoltaic cells inside solar panels. The heat is then converted into usable electricity. Also, the heat absorbed during the day can also be stored and used for heating at night.

It is becoming a common occurrence to see solar panels on roofs of houses for heaters and even on calculators because solar power is generally convenient for use in small quantities.

• Geothermal energy

Just as the Romans used naturally warm spring water for their baths, the temperatures of water beneath the earth are also a source of energy.

Heat beneath the earth increases underground water's temperature. Examples of such are hot springs and geysers. The water here can then be turned into steam which moves a turbine, causing it to generate electricity. This sort of power is produced in our Tiwi geothermal power plant in Albay.

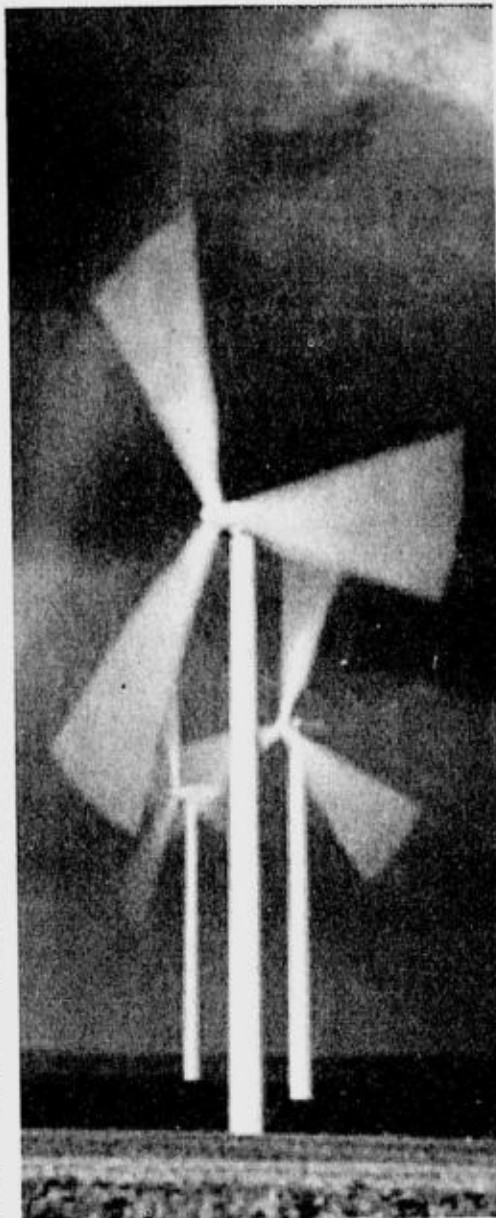
Biofuel

Biofuel is defined as any form of fuel that comes from organic materials. The best example of this would be wood. Wood is burned to provide heat energy, and it is still renewable because trees can be planted again to ensure a supply of wood for burning.

Liquid biofuel like ethanol and biodiesel is usually sourced from plants. It can be mixed with gasoline to provide energy while minimizing the depletion of underground oil.

Biogas is gas released by organic matter that can be used for heating and electricity. For example, animal waste releases methane due to bacterial action. This gas can then be used to produce energy.

Renewable energy sources are still new. They have many disadvantages that still need to be



WIND energy is collected by spinning wind turbines. It is a renewable energy source because it does not use up any resource that may be depleted like oil. Instead, it has a practically unlimited supply of wind for it to generate power.

WWW.BLM.GOV/NHP/WHAT/LANDS/REALTY/WIND_ENERGY.HTM

worked out. (Solar panels can only collect the sun's heat during the day, and are usually expensive. Wind turbines can only turn when there is wind, and need to cover a lot of ground.) However, they should be a welcome alternative to fossil fuels and consumers should do what they can to support the development of renewable energy technology.

For as long as renewable energy sources minimize human energy consumption's impact on the natural environment, their extensive use should be a long-term goal for builders. Only then will any structure be truly green.

CONSTRUCTSCOPE

Building tech of the future

WHAT DO THE GMA 7 BUILDING, SM MALL OF ASIA, THE FAR EASTERN University's new building, Aliw Theatre and the Harbour View Complex have in common? They were all built with M2 panels—a revolutionary construction technology that will shield them from the natural elements that plague our country.

M2 panel technology is a groundbreaking approach to architecture in the new millennium. It has the following benefits:

Energy-saving. Since the SM Mall of Asia was built with M2 panels, which have a central layer of one of the best insulating materials ever invented, energy will be saved and properly utilized.

Money-saving. M2 panel technology cuts down on cost by as much as 25 percent. Designed for a minimum workforce, it reduces the steps in traditional construction that are tedious and time-consuming.

Soundproof. M2 panels have superior acoustic quality that leads to significant noise reduction.

Pest-free. Families building their dream home in Santa Rosa Heights or Governor's Hills need not worry about termites or other household pests because polystyrene does not attract any microorganisms.

Bullet resistant. Tests have proven that bullets fired from very high caliber guns cannot penetrate M2 walls.

Simple rough-in installation. Plumbing, heating, electricity and telephones are essential requirements in a home or in the day-to-day operations of a business. M2 panel technology enables plumbing, heating, electricity and telephones to be easily installed.

Able to withstand earthquakes and typhoons. Homes and buildings made with M2 panels can withstand even the harshest conditions.

Meets international standards. M2 panel technology has been used for different applications and designs in 26 countries worldwide for the past 20 years.

In the Philippines, the exclusive manufacturer, marketer and distributor of M2 panels is Marathon Building Technologies Inc. (Tel. Nos. 816-3868 and 816-3873 to 75).

The good life at La Vie Flats

LIVE LIFE TO THE FULLEST AT LA VIE FLATS, A 22-STORY RESIDENTIAL condominium that offers the luxury of breathing space in a nature-inspired setting. With spacious units ranging from 47 to 107 square meters, homeowners enjoy more options to design their living spaces according to their lifestyle. Landscaped gardens, a gym, function rooms and indoor play and study areas for kids enhance the La Vie Flats living experience.

La Vie Flats is part of "The Flats at Parkway," a premium residential block in Filinvest Corporate City in Alabang. Its enviable location puts world-class developments in your backyard while affording a refreshing oasis in a growing satellite city. Vivant Flats, the first building within the 3-tower complex, is scheduled for turnover within the year.

Model units of La Vie Flats will be open for viewing very soon at Festival Supermall. For investment inquiries, please call 850-0777 or e-mail lavieflats@filinvestcorpcity.com. For online information, visit www.filicity.com/lavieflats.

Philbex seminar in Cebu City

AS A DESCENDANT OF AN IMPERIAL FENG SHUI MASTER OF THE LEGENDARY Ming Dynasty, Master Khoon Yong Tan could just stick to the traditions of ancient Chinese feng shui customs and restrain himself from all demands for change. However, he embraced modern technology with utmost fervor and considered it important to further enhance people's lives.

In this year's Philippine Building and Construction Exposition (Philbex), which is slated from May 26 to 28 at the Ayala Center in Cebu City, Tan hopes to convey his objectives to the movers of the industry and inspire them of the wonders of technology and advanced knowledge in feng shui in the construction business. He will be part of the highlighted free seminars on May 27 along with Jose Ma. "Johnny" Hubilla, president of Hubilla Design Group and architect Gilbert Yu.

Philbex seminars, conducted by Worldbex Services International (Tel. Nos. 531-6350, 531-6374 or (032) 343-9620 (Cebu)), continuously set impetus for new innovations and better opportunities for the professionals of the construction industry. These seminars bring together respected and thriving pros to share ideas with each other for the development and empowerment of the trade.



PRAYER DEDICATION

The Active Group recently held a prayer dedication and tree planting activity for the La Salle Townhomes, which is within its Town & Country Heights subdivision in Antipolo. Among the special guests, from left, are Bro. Dante Jose Amisola, FSC; Manolo Alcasabas, director, Active Group; Bro. Emmanuel Hilaado, FSC; architect Cristina Valera-Turalba, vice chair, Active Group; and Bro. Jaime Dalumpines, FSC.

A return to beginnings

FILIPINAS FORM AND LAND CORP. (FF Land) LAUNCHES VILLA STA. MONICA, a one-of-a-kind residential property development in Angat, Bulacan for those seeking to reconnect with their distinctive roots amid a secure and serene environment. FF Land (Tel. Nos. 671-9950 to 53 local 109, 671-5871) is the real estate management and marketing arm of FF Cruz & Co.

Villa Sta. Monica is FF Cruz & Co.'s inspired offering for Angateños and Bulakeños who highly regard the invaluable experiences of reliving their rich heritage and rediscovering the profound meaning of their faith.

Villa Sta. Monica provides modestly priced home lots in a well-planned 14-hectare area that is now Angat's best developed residential offering.

A landscaped entrance forms the welcome sign for residents and visitors in this subdivision with a spacious multipurpose center. A commercial strip at one side of its frontage beckons to entrepreneurial activity.

Village facilities include basketball, tennis, volleyball and badminton courts, a landscaped children's playground, a picnic area, tree-lined pathways and an open meditation garden. A perimeter wall encloses the subdivision that has 10- to 12-meter wide concrete roads, sidewalk curbs and gutter.

Villa Sta. Monica is situated on Encanto-Pandi Road and is accessible from major thoroughfare connecting Bocaue, Sta. Maria, Norzagaray and Guiguinto, Bulacan.

Villa Sta. Monica is now offered at incredibly affordable initial public offering, with individual TCTs, and ready for house construction.

Close encounters with nature at Anvaya

A MERE TWO HOURS OR SO NORTHEAST of Metro Manila, a community of kingfishers, owls and other exotic fauna are matched in diversity by a nearby undersea community of puffer and lion fishes, giant clams and sea turtles.

Drawing from these attractions above ground and beneath the sea, the Anvaya Cove Beach and Nature Club in Morong, Bataan, promises uniquely interactive nature experiences. The club, set to open late this year will be one of the key features of a 320-hectare property of forested foothills that slope down to a 1.2-km-long beach of fine sand. Just 20

minutes from Subic Bay, the nature enclave that has managed to defy the more intense development visible in neighboring areas.

Marly Laraya, project experience manager of Anvaya Cove, said, "The club's most treasured assets are really its naturally beautiful features." Thus, the club's amenities and accommodations have been designed as a series of pavilions that blend in with the surroundings.

Distinguishing feature

Setting the tone for the development, the Nature Camp will stand out as the resort com-

plex's distinguishing feature. It will offer ecological trails, a nature playground and an open-air amphitheater that blends in with the environment. Ziplines that allow users to swing through the area 40 feet above the forest floor are guaranteed to provide a natural high.

Aqua sports, on the other hand, are centered around the Watersports Pavilion. Facilities and equipment for scuba diving, jet skiing, deep sea fishing, windsurfing and kayaking will all be available there.

As an alternative to the sea, a swimming pool that's big enough to be a small lake will offer panoramic views. It will be complemented by a pool for small children with water jets and bubble makers that will provide them endless entertainment.

Restaurant outlets

For the less active, a variety of restaurant outlets will offer views of Anvaya Cove's picturesque setting. The Main Pavilion will include a café, a music lounge, wine room and library. Right at the beach will be a bar and grill, a game room, a lookout tower with a bar, beach cabanas for lounging and massage salas for those seeking the relaxing touch of trained masseuses. For extended stays, the Lagoon Suites will provide one- up to three-bedroom accommodations.

A feature sure to be welcomed by members of the Anvaya Cove Beach and Nature Club (Tel. No. 728-7000) will be the services offered by leisure coordinators. Tasked with fixing programs for members, the coordinators will arrange for picnic lunches, spa appointments, windsurfing lessons as well as sunset cruises "or whatever will make a stay at Anvaya Cove truly unforgettable," Laraya said.



THE 1.2 KILOMETERS of fine sand beach comprises the main cove of Anvaya, the perfect venue for water-sports and undersea adventures.

Prime living at Camp John Hay in Baguio

CAMP JOHN HAY IN BAGUIO IS fast becoming the destination of choice for families looking for a place to spend quality vacation time and those who are planning to spend vacation on a more permanent basis. Real estate properties inside the former US rest and recreation resort have attracted locals, as well as foreigners, since it was opened to the public in the late '90s.

Best sellers are the Camp John Hay Manor and Suites Condotels; elegant residential homes such as the Country Homes and Forest Cabins; and the residential estate lots. All of these are available on a long-term lease and a first come-first served basis.

Reasons for buying

Camp John Hay unit owners cite the resort's peacefulness, relaxing atmosphere, clean air and security as the main reasons for their decision to purchase real estate properties in the area. While traffic and pollution have become major concerns for Baguio residents, in Camp John Hay these problems are nonexistent.

The Camp John Hay Condotels such as the Manor, and the Suites are the hot picks of buyers because of their affordability and special benefits.

The Camp John Hay Manor has a total of 189 units while the Camp John Hay Suites has 278 rooms.

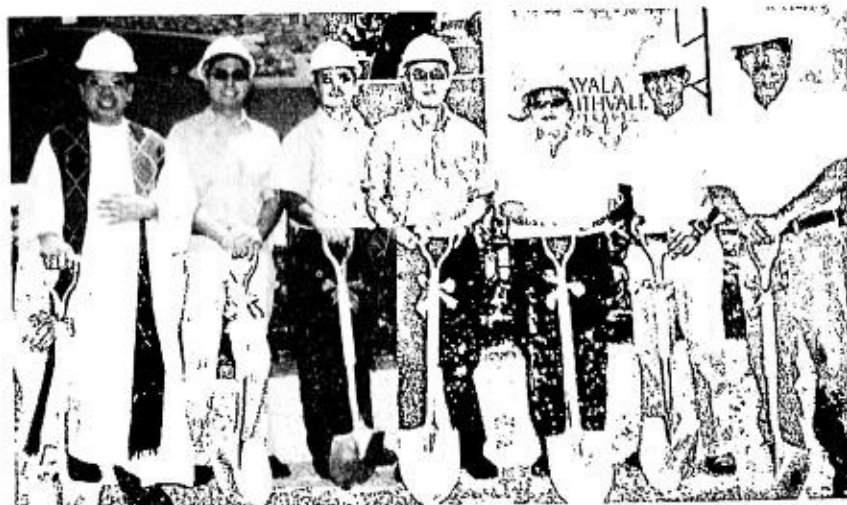
These Condotel facilities have three kinds of units: studio unit, which has an average floor area of 40 square meters; one-bedroom suite with an average floor area of 80 sq m; and two-bedroom suite reaching a total floor area of 145 sq m. The Camp John Hay Manor, which is now on its 4th year of operations is (almost) always fully booked especially during peak seasons like the Christmas holidays, Holy Week and summer.

Estate lots

There are also estate lots where buyers can build their dream home from among the country log designs or create a new design with Camp John Hay's master architect,

RRPayumo + Partners. There are 49 lots scattered in prime areas in the whole Camp. The smallest is around 400 sq m while the biggest is around 1,300 sq m. Prices range from P4 to P16 million based on the special price tag of P9,500 per square meter on cash transactions, and as much as P12,500 on terms.

Also available are residential homes such as the single-detached Country Homes located in the vicinity of the golf course and near the golf clubhouse and the Forest Cabins, medium-size duplex units located in Scout Hill are also available. The Forest Cabins, each with an attic, have a gross floor area of 150 sq m. They are priced between P9 and P10 million.



SHOWN (above) during the ceremonial groundbreaking (from left) are Mel Cruz, Joel Luna and Jay Caniza. LEFT photo shows Fr. Nico Bautista, project manager for Sonera Jong Romero, Mel Cruz, Joel Luna, Cristy Comia, Dindo Guererro and Jay Caniza.

Ayala Land breaks ground for Sonera's Village Green

AYALA LAND PREMIER RECENTLY HELD groundbreaking rites for the Village Green—the "heart" of Ayala Southvale Village Sonera's community that will serve as an idyllic venue where homeowners can gather for various bonding activities.

Sonera is designed to become a "fenceless community"—a village that fosters warmth and neighborly living. At the Village Green, homeowners will find a shared space where they can freely get together for recreation and leisure.

Symbolic items

The groundbreaking ceremony was preceded by a Holy Mass led by Msgr. Nico Bautista from the Alfonsus Ligouri Parish, followed by the blessing of the symbolic documents and items. Among the items that were placed in the time capsule by corresponding officials who graced the event were the project's land titles by Jong Romero, project manager for Sonera; the development permit by Mel Cruz (senior division manager for ALP Construction Management Group); and the architectural plan by Joel Luna (assistant vice president for Technical Planning Division).

Other items were the landscape plan by Cristy Comia (senior division manager, ALP Construction Management Group, Landscaping Unit); the Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) by Jay Caniza (department manager, Technical Planning Division, project architect for Sonera); and the day's newspaper by Dindo Guererro (managing partner of Abesamis Guererro Architects, Sonera's project consultant).

Preview of idyllic life

After the official groundbreaking activities, guests were invited to celebrate the occasion with an "Off-the-Grill" lunch buffet hosted by ALP. While the adults sampled the sumptuous barbecue specialties, kids were left to freely run around the future site of the Village Green flying their kites, and blowing bubbles to their hearts' content. "This is just a preview of the idyllic life that Sonera will soon be home to," said Jay Caniza (department manager for Technical Planning Division). "The fence-free homes will encourage interaction among homeowners. Kids can roam around freely without their parents worrying because they practically know everyone inside the village. ALP's state-of-the-art security system will also ensure the safety of every resident inside the village."

Central venue

As the central venue of the community's activities, the Village Green will reflect the design architecture of the homes inside Sonera and will therefore have a contemporary look and feel, said Joel Luna, AVP for Technical Planning Division.

"We wanted something fresh-looking, which we don't typically see in other suburban areas. The architecture was made to have cleaner lines, more upbeat and modern, but still familiar. We particularly chose an architecture that appeals to younger tastes, more cosmopolitan, and fits in with the stature and prestige of Alabang to which Sonera is intrinsically linked," Luna explained.

The Village Green complex which occupies almost a hectare will be divided into two structures: the multipurpose pavilion or the clubhouse and the indoor courts, with a swimming pool found at the center linking the two facilities. A Kids' Park will entice children to play all day at the Play Pool, Gazebo and interactive playground, while fitness enthusiasts can tread the Adventure Path for biking, walking, or simply enjoying the landscaped gardens and scenic views.

"Birthdays, meetings and other functions can be held at the pavilion, while sports buffs can utilize the indoor courts. The Village Green will also have a lounge and smaller private function areas where residents can get together for recreational and social events," Caniza added.

The Village Green will basically serve as an "extension" of the homes—a property shared by all the residents, Luna emphasized.

Conveniently located at the center of the village, the Village Green harmonizes perfectly with the surroundings, Luna added.

Ideal residence

Ayala Southvale Village Sonera is envisioned to be the ideal residence for the younger, growing family. Masterplanned to host approximately 234 lots designed for single-detached houses, the community covers a total area of approximately 21 hectares of prime real estate.

Due to its excellent location in the Alabang complex, homeowners will enjoy the advantages of living close to prestigious schools, shopping malls, leading institutions and business districts.

Sonera is another project by Ayala Land Premier—the new name for the top-end developments of Ayala Land providing security, ultimate comfort and privacy. With its superior customer care and property management, ALP (tel. no. 728-7000) ensures exclusivity and value over time.

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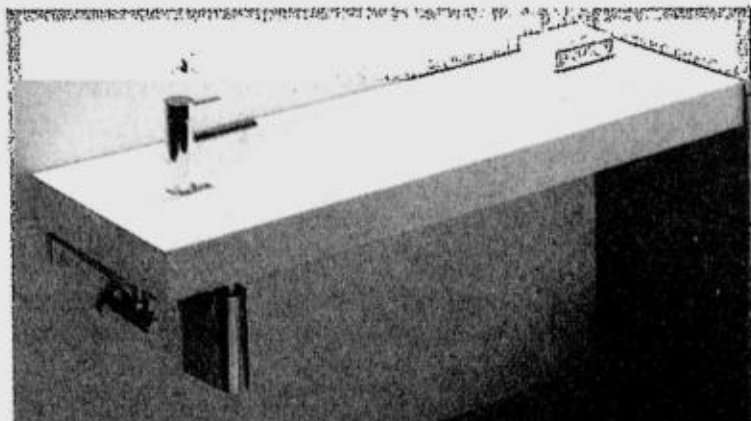
By Charles E. Buban

HARDWARE SUPPLIERS AND MANUFACTURERS nationwide see much potential for markets in the Visayas and Mindanao region where wealth is steadily growing, where families are keen to buy new homes and where more and more people are pursuing upgrades or making renovations.

This was announced by L. A. Ducut and Co., the organizer of the largest and biggest construction expo in southern Philippines, which is scheduled to open next week.

"These trends continue to prevail despite some concerns over our economy," said Lilibeth Ducut-Abais of LA Ducut and Co. (construction-show@laducut.com), who told the media that the 14th Construction Show Cebu will be open from June 2 to 5 at the Trade Hall of SM City Cebu.

"This event will allow visitors to get a glimpse of the latest construction materials and technology that may provide solutions to get their projects done right and on time. Be a part of the country's largest construction expo in the re-



gion and get answers to some of your concerns like what color of paint is best on your sidings, to what type of roofing to use, and even to what bathroom fixture will suit best to your home's motif," said Ducut.

Generating opportunities

She added that the annual event generates many opportunities for buyers and sellers in the

MODERN and space-saving Suzuri marble counter will be among the event's major exhibitors.

hardware and home construction business.

"This is equally true for the Philippine manufacturers displaying their unique, new products to the world and for multinational exhibitors entering the fast-expanding markets of the Asian region," she said.

Among the exhibitors in the forthcoming event are the GT Stoneworks which markets natural-stone alternatives that create a unique feel to any home structure and Ro-Plast which sells uPVC glass paneled doors and windows that reduce noise and pollution while at the same time possess excellent insulation properties (translating to less electricity consumption on summer months and better heat retention during cold or rainy days).

"We even have exhibitors like Globe International Distributor Inc. which distributes Faultless Mortise Locks that offers a revolutionary titanium antitarnish coating," added Ducut.

Another exhibitor is Boral's EchoStop Plasterboard which offers acoustic and decorative solution for walls and ceilings designed for applications requiring the highest esthetic consid-

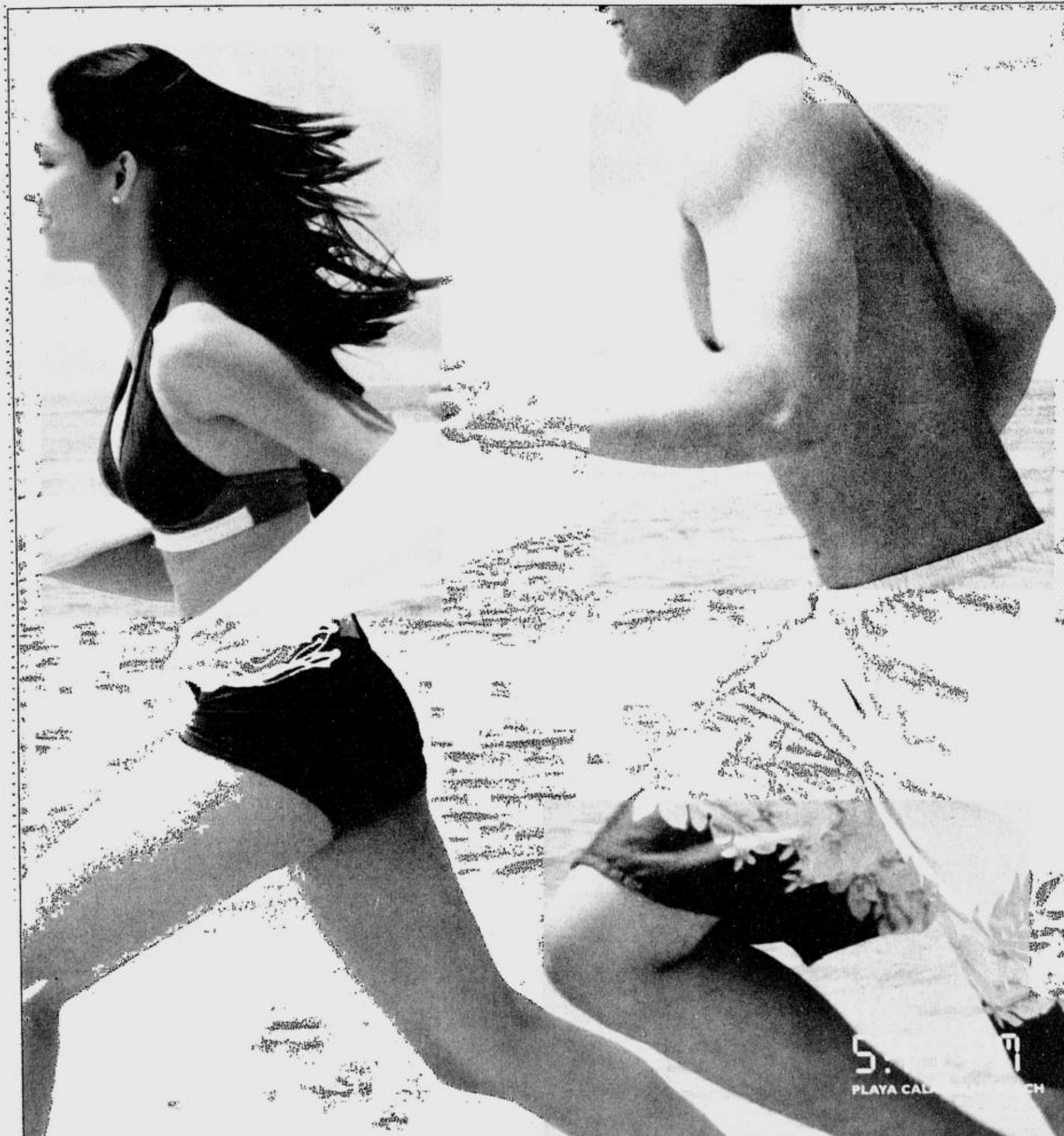
erations while maintaining excellent sound absorption capabilities.

Illuminate and purify

"Equally interesting are these products from Eontec Biolyte that doesn't only illuminate a room but also purify the air around it," said Ducut adding that GE Lighting Systems will also be presenting its latest energy-efficient yet high intensity discharging lighting fixtures.

Ducut also enumerated several bathroom package and fixture providers like Villeroy & Boch Pure Stone collection that offers chic pebble-like water closets and lavatories and source flow tap fitting; Loop and Friends washbasins with its New Wave design; and Toto's Savanna Lavatory with its multifunction wash basin with automatic sensor faucets.

The 14th Construction Show Cebu is sponsored by APO Premium Quality, Bostik Philippines Inc., BusinessWorld, Alcorado Advertising, Sunstar Publications Network and Silvers Builders & Architects Professional Magazine and the Philippine Daily Inquirer.



MADONNA

Filinvest Land to unveil new luxury home collection

BRENTVILLE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, the world-class residential development for expatriate and Filipino families of leading property developer Filinvest Land Inc. (FLI), will unveil its new luxury home collection called "The Masterpieces" tomorrow, with two house-and-lot models that best exemplify "the art of fine living."

At the formal launch of The Masterpieces at Brentville, FLI president Joseph Yap and top company officials will lead in the unveiling ceremonies at 10 a.m., while various family and art activities take place until 5 p.m.

Children can join the "Paint like Da Vinci" contest while invited visual artists sketch portraits of guests and Brentville residents. Meanwhile, interested buyers attending the event can take advantage of a complimentary trip for four persons to Boracay Island.

'First homes'

Inspired by some of the greatest works of art in recent history, The Masterpieces are upscale single-detached homes aptly named Madonna and Mona Lisa.

Primarily marketed as "first homes" embodying the privileged suburban lifestyle, the Masterpieces have wider lot areas of 316 square meters and are located within the exclusive subcommunities of Prominence 2 and Woodmore Spring at Brentville.

"The Masterpieces are our limited offerings this year for expatriate and Filipino families, including active retirees, looking for tastefully designed homes that are smaller in scale and therefore priced lower," said FLI's project group head Julian Concepcion Jr.

Mediterranean architecture

Consistent with the "sunny Southern Californian ambience" of Brentville, the Masterpieces are elegantly designed along the lines of Mediterranean architecture, exuding timeless appeal and superior craftsmanship. It also boasts of superior space planning, construction and finishing works all throughout the usable floor areas of 231 square meters for Madonna and 186 sq m for Mona Lisa.

Concepcion said each Masterpiece home "artfully blends a myriad of textures, rich earth-tone colors, attractively tiled roofs, quaint front porches and handsomely accented windows," which all complement the natural beauty of its surroundings.

2 home models

The captivating two-level Madonna, the bigger Masterpiece home priced between P8.2 million and P17 million, offers families with growing households three bedrooms, including a master's suite with a walk-in closet, an airy family hall, a viewing balcony and meticulously designed spaces for a cozy living area, a practical kitchen with a service area, a maid's room with a separate toilet and bath, a powder room, storage area, a carport, porch and lanai.

On the other hand, the Mona Lisa, a charming two-story home priced between P7.5 million and P20.4 million, features three bedrooms and well-defined spaces for living and dining areas, a functional kitchen for the house gourmet, a maid's room and a separate laundry area, a carport, a porch and a lanai. Mona Lisa is perfect for starter families, bachelors, young professionals and retirees.

At Prominence 2, expatriate families can even own a Masterpiece home under a Condominium Certificate of Title (CCT), the first of its kind for a horizontal development in the country.

The house-and-lot packages of the Masterpieces come at lower cash payment rates but are also available through easy in-house or external financing arrangements with zero-percent deferred payment of up to two-and-a-half years. Selected lots-only offerings are priced at P9,600 per square meter.

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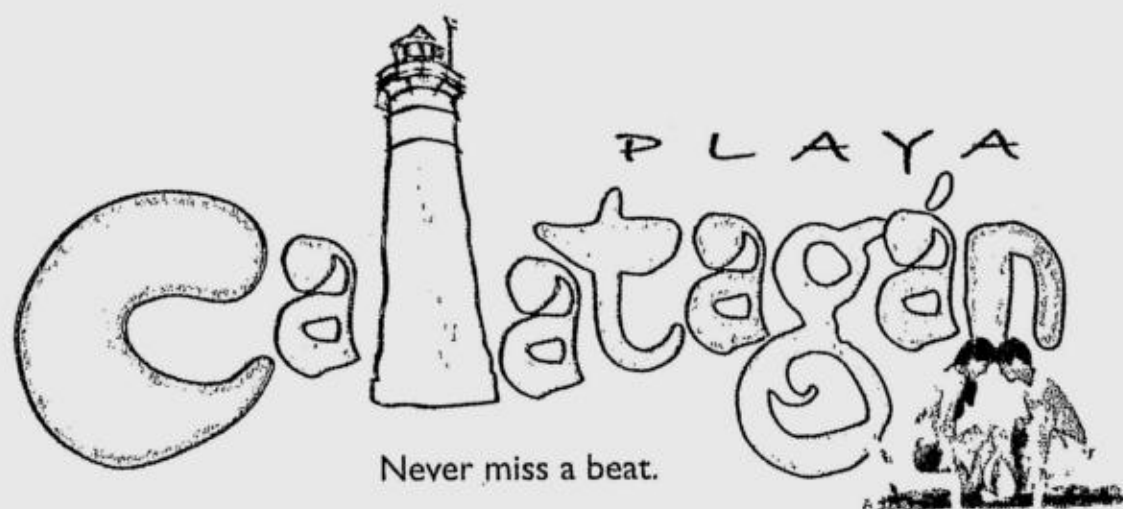
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three 

The King

of the seas

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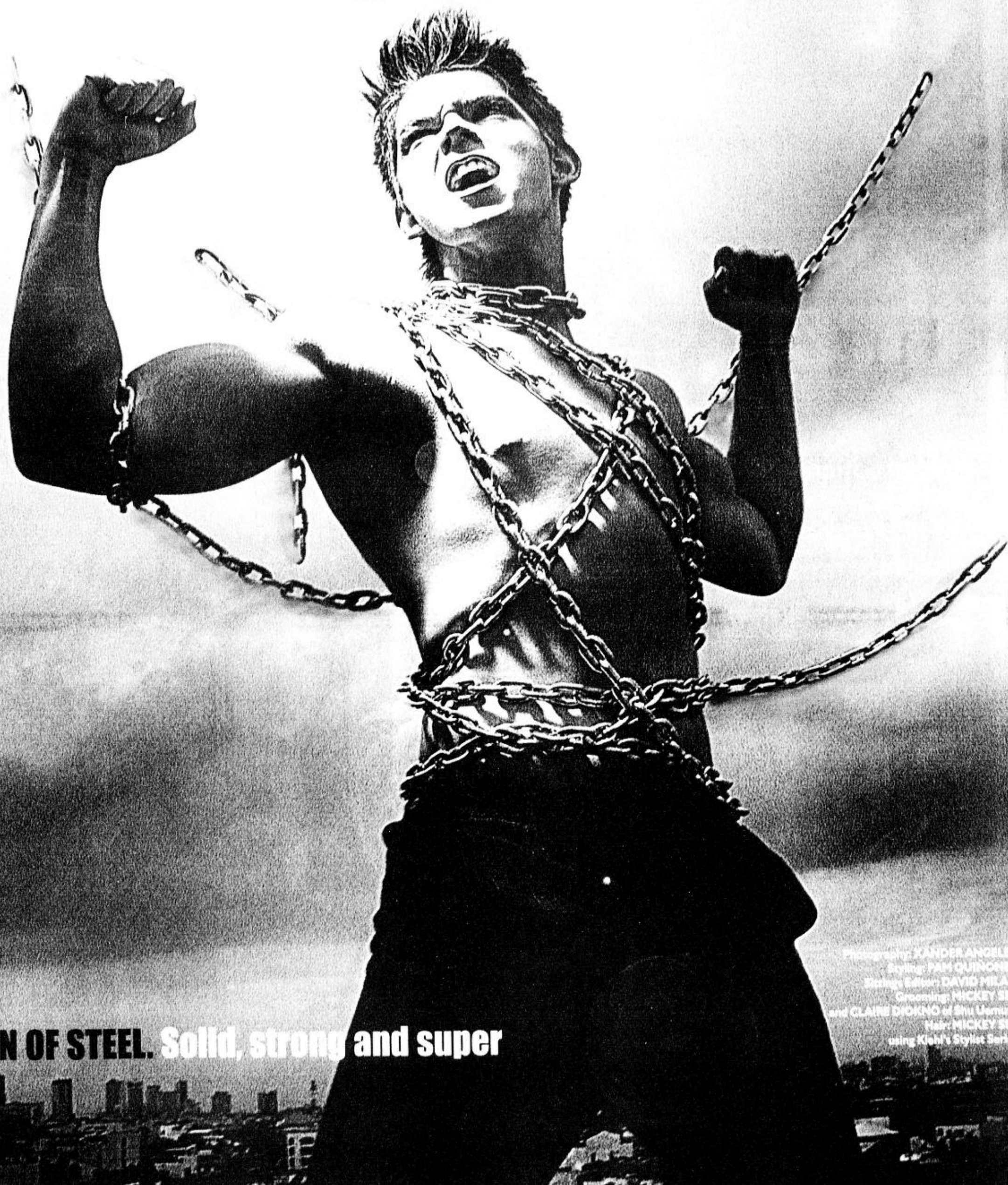


S.M.
DEPARTMENT STORE

Check the Lifestyle Section every other week for the latest in SM Advantage promos and highlights.

Oh Captain, my

Captain!



MAN OF STEEL. Solid, strong and super

Photography: XANDER ANGELES
Styling: PAM QUINONES
Beauty Editor: DAVID MILAN
Grooming: MICKEY SEE
and CLARE DIOKNO of Shit Usanara
Hair: MICKEY SEE
using Kiehl's Stylist Series

RICHARD GUTIERREZ IS hungry for higher learning. In between hopping from one superhero role after another, the Gutierrez scion was able to escape to the Land Down Under last month to visit a friend who was taking up further studies at the University of Sydney.

"I just sat in one of the classes and it was like—wow!" Exclaimed a wide-eyed Chard as he recalled his latest schooling experience. "In the States when we were young, we transferred homes a lot, so we went to four different schools for elementary alone!"

It must have been this constant shifting that made Richard feel so at ease tackling roles that form part of our pop cultural sushi. Who would have thought that a half bird half human creature would soar high up the ratings heaven



Tim Yap

and would be the first in a series of immortalizing marks that Richard would score in his young life? To date, it is officially Mulawin that jumpstarted the fantasy craze. When people in the streets see the yin-yang symbol of power, what do they scream out? "Sugo! Sugo!"

All these are not folklore. All of the above serve as proof that Richard Gutierrez has come of age—he has flexed his muscles strong enough to take a throne that is rightfully his. The next generation of boob tube addicts will grow up and ask them who for them is a superhero—chances are, one name will pop out.

Everybody wants a piece of the young

man. So busy is he that for an award a local university bestowed on him, he had to ask eldest sister Ruffa Bektas to accept the award on his behalf. He continually has a rigid 48-hour schedule that gives him no time for sleep or rest.

Casting coup

For his latest TV casting coup, his home network had to use an animated image and an old photo of his face for the billboard. To top it off, Pinoys on the street love to call him names.

At the rooftop of Xander Angeles' studio with the vast makati skyline as backdrop, we stood on the verge of vertigo trying to get a perfect shot of the "man of steel" styled (by Super! new favorite Pam Quinones) image. And then we heard voices. People were waving at us (at least that's what I thought) from down below. And they chorused towards our direction, "Captain Barbell! Captain Barbell!" screamed their voices with glee.

Either these kids had X ray vision or

parents now give their offspring a healthy dose of Vitamin B, but I was shocked to know that even from super miles away, mass culture has a new hero.

Alas, even the showbiz industry has already recognized this fact, and even Richard Gomez, the perennial Pinoy male lead has chosen to play Captain Barbell's nemesis for this new GMA series which premieres this May 29. So, its going to be one helluva'n exciting battle—Richard versus Richard!

Super! take two, take three!

We here At Super! truly make it a "career" experience, one issue after another making sure our Super! readers get the best of style, urban living, pop culture, entertainment and recreation. Last year's Super banner ad came with Richard's face on the cover, along with it a blurb that says it all. "Stig"—slang for Astig, as in, Super! It is but fitting for us as we commence our third anniversary

celebration by launching a series of "threes." (Watch out for it starting this month and onwards till the month of August, when we have our "I Am Super" Awards and Artist's Fair with KC Concepcion.) And what better way by working with someone who is on a roll with his third superhero role?

In this particular third anniversary special, you'll see a power portfolio of Richard working with the industry's best to embody three different visions of greatness—with the earth, air and water as backdrop to the burning fire of Richard Gutierrez, actor.

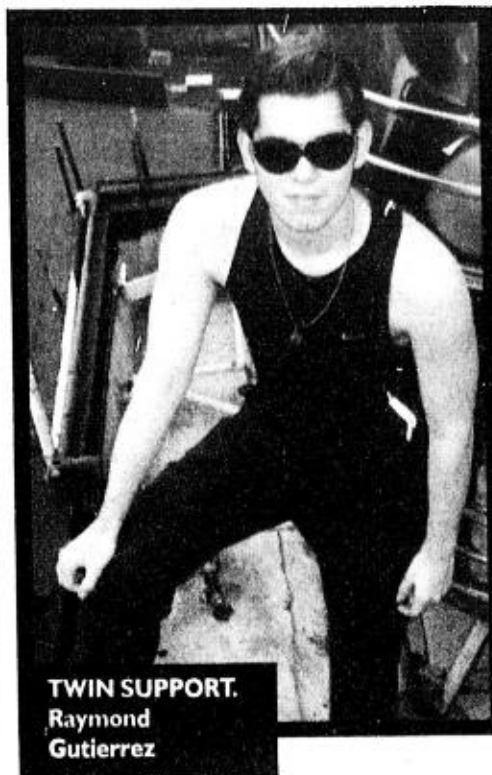
I therefore predict that 2006 and beyond will continually be the year of the Super! On a pop culture education standpoint, we realize that there's a lot to be done in elevating the levels of taste and freedom that artists continually fight for. Looking at Richard and all you Super's out there, we can tell that the future looks bright.

Up, up and away!

Above the scenes ...



A DIFFERENT KIND OF DIRECTOR. Xander Angeles guides Richard Gutierrez



TWIN SUPPORT. Raymond Gutierrez



SHU-PER DUO. Claire Diokno and Mickey See

By David Milan

EVERY SUPER! SHOOT has been nothing but exciting—especially because we work with great teams and great subjects. We always make sure the readers get to see the ingenuity of the best talents this country has to offer.

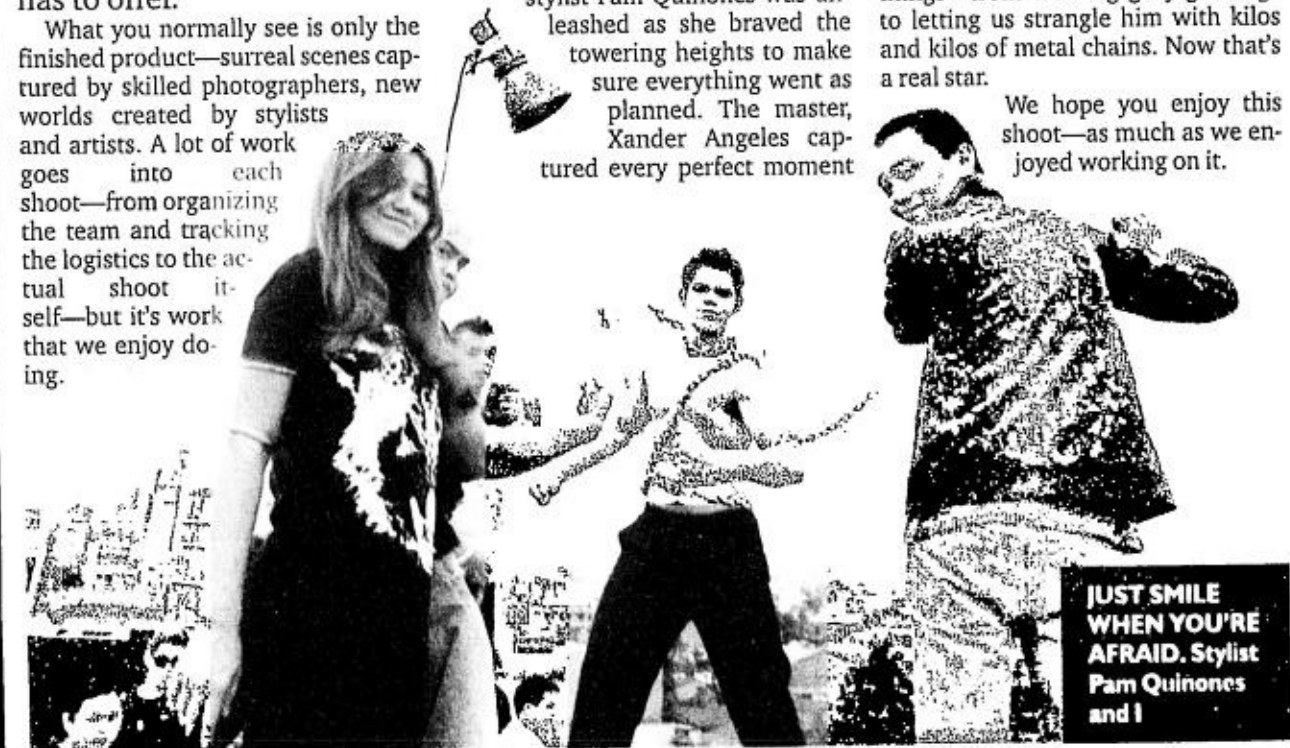
What you normally see is only the finished product—surreal scenes captured by skilled photographers, new worlds created by stylists and artists. A lot of work goes into each shoot—from organizing the team and tracking the logistics to the actual shoot itself—but it's work that we enjoy doing.

For our first special third anniversary issue, we decided to give a whole new meaning to the term "career" shoot. Oh yes, it's our birthday but we'd rather give our readers a gift.

The night before this shoot, everyone was excited, nervous and even nauseous! Kidding. But yeah, we were all excited and nervous. Everyone wanted to make sure they'd give the shoot their all. And they did just that. The rebel hidden inside sweet stylist Pam Quinones was unleashed as she braved the towering heights to make sure everything went as planned. The master, Xander Angeles captured every perfect moment

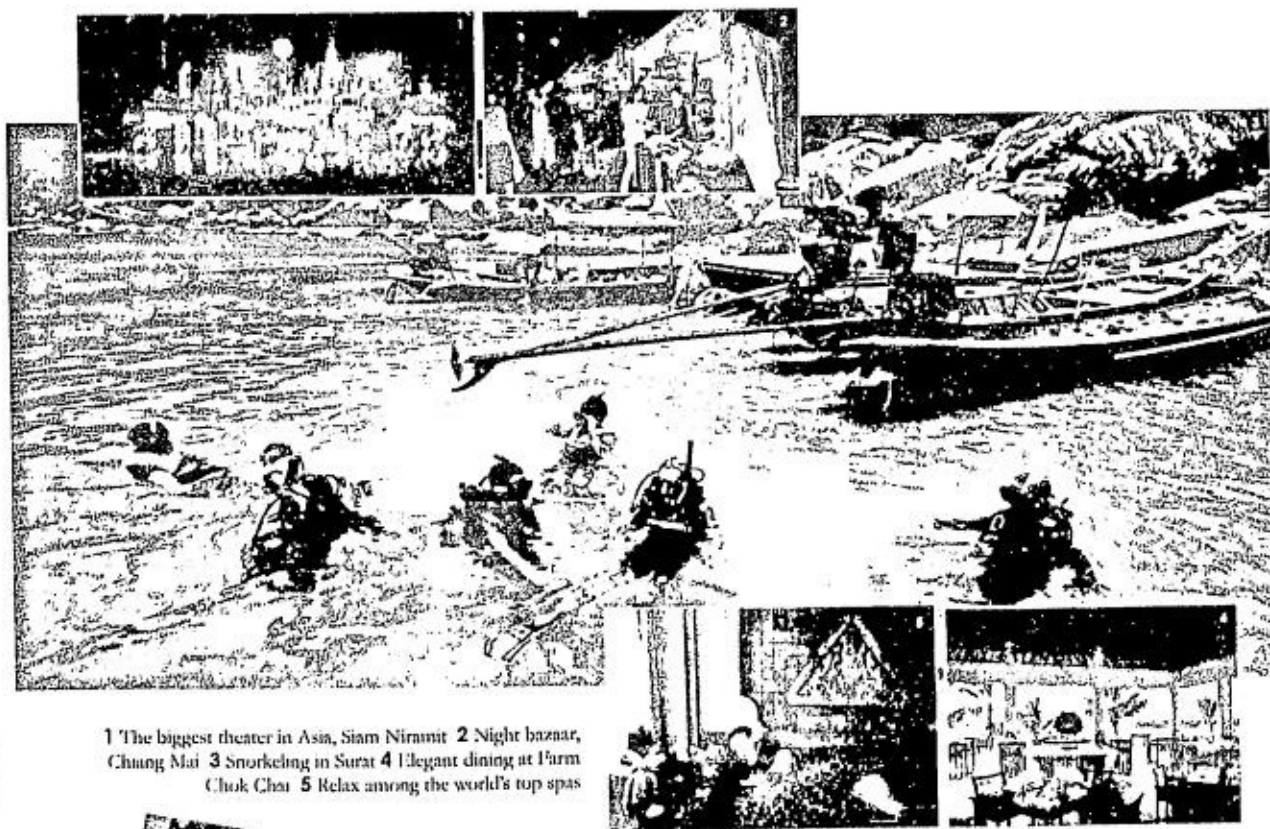
there was, may it be above the sky, under the bodega and in between. The Shu Uemura duo Mickey See and Claire Diokno used their super powers to create visually stimulating facial effects (We will forever salute Claire for cutting her own hair for the man-beast photo). Richard, the superstar that he is, was a good team player, as usual. He didn't have any qualms at all—not even when we asked him to do all kinds of crazy things—from wearing girly-girl wigs to letting us strangle him with kilos and kilos of metal chains. Now that's a real star.

We hope you enjoy this shoot—as much as we enjoyed working on it.

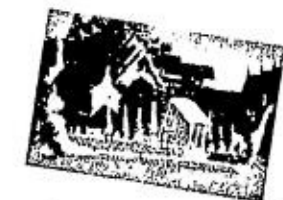


JUST SMILE WHEN YOU'RE AFRAID. Stylist Pam Quinones and I

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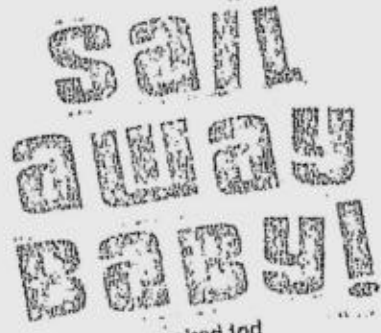
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24/7

Paolo R. Reyes
Janine Cuenca-Dario

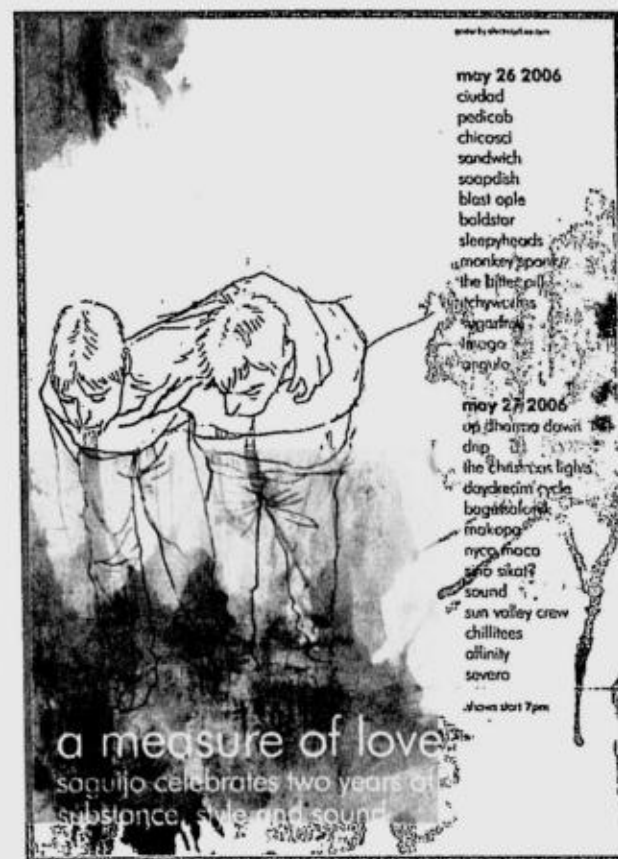
IF YOU'VE BEEN DYING TO fly halfway around the world to experience the booty-shaking rituals and syncopated salsa rhythms of a Caribbean carnival (but squirm at the thought of shelling out \$2,000 for a roundtrip ticket to sun-dipped Puerto Rico), you're in for a surprise next weekend.

Forget "Dancing with the Stars," The Pavarotti of Salsa Music himself, Tito Nieves (www.titonieves.com), brings his infectious Latin-infused funk to the PICC Reception Hall [CCF Complex, Roxas Blvd., Pasay City] on Saturday, June 3.

Together with his 16-piece band from Orlando, Florida, the Grammy-nominated salsero cooks up a steady serving of sexy salsa beats, topped with a contemporary sprinkling of R&B, reggaeton, and rap. Call 891-9999 or visit www.ticketworld.com.ph.

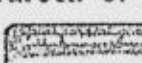
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**Reposo Art & Music
Festival, May 27 & 28**

Call it neighborhood pride. This weekend, the cozy tree-lined stretch of Nicanor Garcia Street in Bel-Air, Makati closes down for "Pintahan at Musikahan Sa Reposo." an outdoor street festival featuring an arts-and-crafts bazaar, mural painting sessions, sculpture installations, food fairs, and free film screenings at Alliance Française. During the evenings, you can dine al fresco while listening to the music of Makiling Ensemble, Chakra, Elemento, Coke Bolipata, and other local artists. Call 724-3032 or 895-5470.

Other Super! 24/7 events:

May 27, Saturday

Chicane: Live in Manila! at the World Trade Center; Mastermind: The Magik of Erik Mana at Music Museum; Mojolly at Dish; Nemanja Radulovic at Philamlife Theater

Project Mayhem at Conspiracy; Reggae Mistress at 70s Bistro; Johnny Alegre Affinity at Shangri-La Streetscape; 20something Saturdays w/ GP Reyes & Stephen Ku at Mezz; Freshly Squeezed at Citrus; DJ Martin Pulgar at Embassy Club; Campusion Night at Mag:Net Café; Pump Saturdays at Jill's; Wiseguys at Suburbia Malate; DJ Badboy Jeff at Temple; Soundsgood DJs at Embassy Cuisine; Barn del Valle at Government; DJs Scratchmark & Shorty at Prince of Jalpur; Flintstones & the Gang at Merk's; Massive Saturdays at Bed

May 28, Sunday

MYMP, Wiseguys, & Sam Milby at Bagaberde, Roxas Blvd.; Philippine Badminton Open at Ultra; Clowns Without Borders Photo Exhibit at Alliance Francaise and Greenbelt

May 29, Monday

Mano-mano & Beautiful Day at 70s Bistro; Broadway Night w/ Melissa Reyes (Miss Saigon Germany) at Conspiracy; Salsa Night w/ Salsa Filipinas at Mezz; Ethan band at Temple; I Don't Like Mondays! w/ DJ Ro at Gwellos Makati; Teresa Avila at The Tivoli; Dawn & Jessie at Merk's; Eastwind Jazz Trio at Captain's Bar; Foillies de Mwah at Club Mwah

May 30, Tuesday

Parokya ni Edgar at Conspiracy; Panic w/ DJs Alessandra Tinio & Chlo Castañeda at Zen; Kickback Tuesdays at Manila DJ Club; The Bloomfields at Dish; Guarana at Café Havana Greenbelt; Acoustic Night at Temple; Anya Santos at 70s Bistro; Spirit of '67 at Captain's Bar

May 31, Wednesday

Weekend Wednesdays w/ DJ Boyet Almazan at Strumm's; The Bloomfields at Bellevue Hotel in Alabang; Discotech w/ DJ Papi Santos at Mezzé; DJs Karl Ty & Cao Ocampo at Embassy Cuisine; Funksojlah at Manila DJ Club; DJs Mars Miranda & Johnnyverse at Embassy Club; Willy Wanka's Music Factory w/ Joffy Cruz at Gwielos Makati; Double Happiness at Prince of Jaipur; DJ Crash at Temple; DJ Brit at Government; Jazz Night at Mag:Net Café Katipunan; Julia Duncan at Merks; Noel Cabangon at Conspiracy; Asin at 70s Bistro

June 1, Thursday

Parokya ni Edgar & The Bloomfields at Dish; Four Aces at Manila Hotel; Wunjo at 70s Bistro; Reggae Night at 6Underground; BBC's Sweet Suite Soul w/ DJ Mike Constantino at Sake Lab; GottaHave-House! at Capone's; GSM Liquor Spill at Lounge; SPIT at Mag.net Café; G Lounge at Mezze; Latina Thursday at Prince of Jaipur; Fluxx: Whatever Thursdays at Manila DJ Club; Supahstar DJ Thursdays at Bed; DJ Badboy Jeff at Temple

June 2, Friday

Sandwich at 6Underground; Sitti at Stonehouse and Eastwood Central Plaza; Allegoria Stanza at CCG; French Cuisine Week at Tivoli; Decadence w/ Boyet Almazan at Jill's; DJ Benjo Marquez at Meze; Fashion Fridays w/ Djs Karl Ty & GP Reyes at Citrus; DJ Owens Sun at Embassy Club; HouseBeats at Matl; MyHOUSE at M Café; DJ Marie Garcia at Embassy Cuisine; DJ Brit at Government; Jive Fridays at Temple; The Jerks at 70s Bistro; Gogo Fridays at Bed; Route 70 at Merk's; Djs Bliss & Shorty at Prince of Jaipur; Mitch Valdes at Captain's Bar

Schedules may change without prior notice. For more information and a complete listing of events, text 24/7 through your mobile phone and send to 2949 (Globe) and 209 (Smart). Log on to mag24-7.com or pick up your free copy of 24/7 Nocturnal Navigator at bars and restaurants around the city. Submit your schedules before Wednesday to events@mag24-7.com and mag24_7@yahoo.com.

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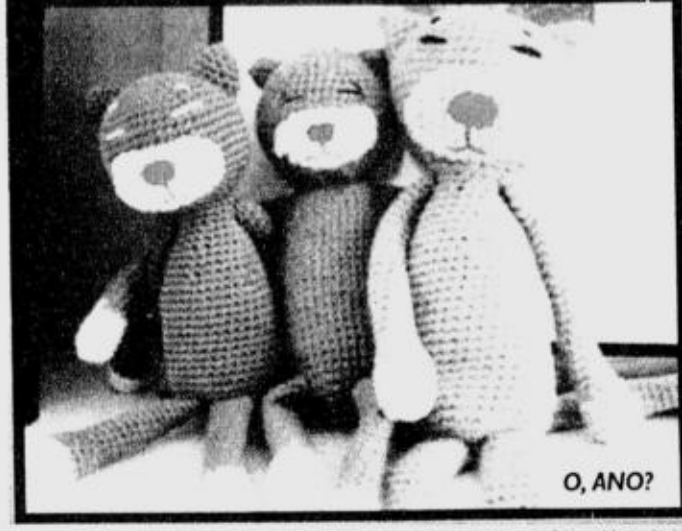
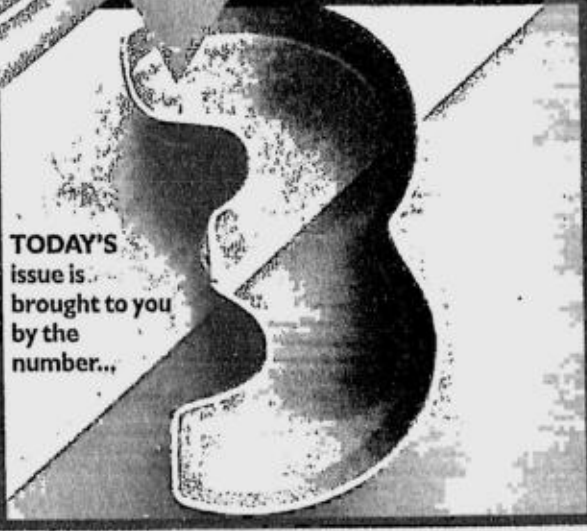
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THE THREE Headed Knight
from "Monty Python and the
Holy Grail"



O, ANO?

Third year high

Here's to growing up, thinking out loud, and, like, finally rocking the universe! Happy birthday to all of us, the Super generation

Age against
the machine



Gino de la Paz

TO WRITE ON A WEEKLY basis is not as easy as it looks, especially for an ever-evolving youth section like this one.

But three years on—that's close to 150 weekends of light-hearted shout-outs and other risqué interludes—we're still at it, leaping out in Technicolor newsprint every Saturday to give you a sweaty bear hug or a friendly upper cut. (Sometimes, we like to do it at the same time. Wink.) Who knew, right?

Snide little Gen Z comments aside, running "a little school paper" such as Super—I stole that metaphor from worldly wordsmith Tals Diaz—has proven to be a huge learning experience, like multiple "Aha!" moments for the price of one. To prevent this anniversary from turning into an annual orgy of self-congratulation though, I'd like to scribble my homage to this surreal journey and, like it or not, pass on those somewhat warped coming-of-age anecdotes to you all.

On information and inspiration

Like I said, regularly churning out writerly material—yielding genuinely golden insights along the way—is tough. First, you have to wade through worlds of info, set aside the worthy topics in your mind, then TiVo the rest for later use. I have to admit there have been days, weeks even, when I was overwhelmed by all the stuff I could possibly write about that I went through a creative rigor mortis. Result? Nada. Zip. Wala. Help!

See, it's one thing to 'unlock' the labyrinth of your unconscious, get all the freaky-deaky adolescent stuff out, and "vomit onto a canvas," to quote "Donnie Darko" director Richard Kelly. It's another thing to edit and distill all that to come up with an essay that makes sense, something tight, stylish, and with a distinct point-of-view. Once you get over that hump, however, you'll find that writing can become one of post-post-punk life's greatest pleasures.

After almost three years, I still can't say that I'm a career vet when it comes to cobbling columns. Far from it. But at least, with the frequent discipline I get from pounding on a keyboard like a monkey with a helicopter view on youth culture, I now know the difference between

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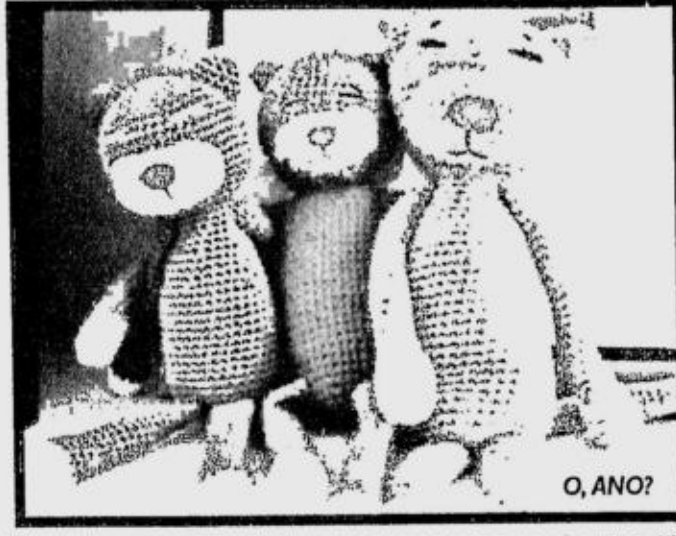
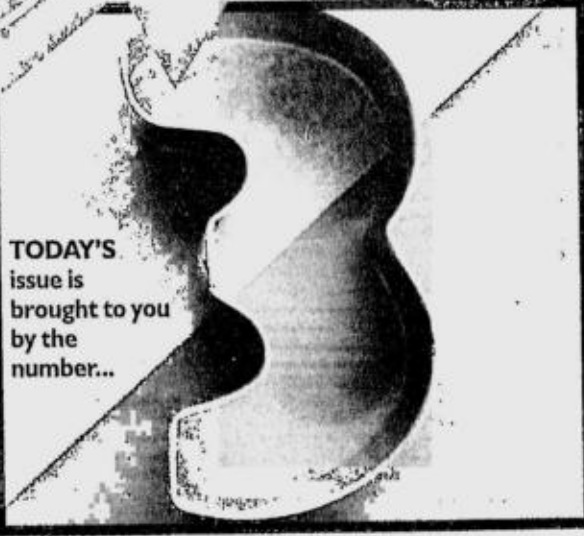
SMART 3G

See flyers for details.
Promo runs until June 15, 2006.
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 2801, Series of 2006.

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style • urban living •

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Third year high

Here's to growing up, thinking out loud, and, like, finally rocking the universe! Happy birthday to all of us, the Super generation

Age against the machine



Gino de la Paz

TO WRITE ON A WEEKLY basis is not as easy as it looks, especially for an ever-evolving youth section like this one.

But three years on—that's close to 150 weekends of light-hearted shout-outs and other risqué interludes—we're still at it, leaping out in Technicolor newsprint every Saturday to give you a sweaty bear hug or a friendly upper cut. (Sometimes, we like to do it at the same time. Wink.) Who knew, right?

Snide little Gen Z comments aside, running "a little school paper" such as Super—I stole that metaphor from worldly wordsmith Tals Diaz—has proven to be a huge learning experience, like multiple "Aha!" moments for the price of one. To prevent this anniversary from turning into an annual orgy of self-congratulation though, I'd like to scribble my homage to this surreal journey and, like it or not, pass on those somewhat warped coming-of-age anecdotes to you all.

On information and inspiration

Like I said, regularly churning out writerly material—yielding genuinely golden insights along the way—is tough. First, you have to wade through worlds of info, set aside the worthy topics in your mind, then Tivo the rest for later use. I have to admit there have been days, weeks even, when I was overwhelmed by all the stuff I could possibly write about that I went through a creative rigor mortis. Result? Nada. Zip. Wala. Help!

See, it's one thing to unlock the labyrinth of your unconscious, get all the freaky-deaky adolescent stuff out, and "vomito onto a canvas," to quote "Donnie Darko" director Richard Kelly. It's another thing to edit and distill all that to come up with an essay that makes sense, something tight, stylish, and with a distinct point-of-view. Once you get over that hump, however, you'll find that writing can become one of post-post-punk life's greatest pleasures.

After almost three years, I still can't say that I'm a career vet when it comes to cobbling columns. Far from it. But at least, with the frequent discipline I get from pounding on a keyboard like a monkey with a helicopter view on youth culture, I now know the difference between

THIRD/D2

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THE BEAST UNLEASHED.
Relies on his animal instincts,
intense, unstoppable

Vision versus X-ray vision

This generation's the 'Me' generation—let's make it Super

Photography: XANDER ANGELES
Styling: PAM QUINONES
Sittings Editor: DAVID MILAN
Grooming: MICKEY SEE
and CLAIRE DIOKNO of Shu Uemura
Hair: MICKEY SEE
using Kiehl's Stylist Series

By Pepe Diokno

WANT X-RAY VISION? Man, that'd be cool—if you fail college, you can always get a job at the airport. I will end the crappy intro right there.

But yeah, a lot of us have X-ray vision at the top of our superpowers list. It's cool being able to see through clothing; to look at the insides of people and tell what's wrong with them. It's fun and easy!

But let me tell you a secret. We all have X-ray vision, and we use it everyday. We look at each other and scrutinize every little thing we see. I bet you love seeing other people through your X-ray eyes. We enjoy seeing people in their most vulnerable states.

But I'll tell you another secret—just between us super-

heroes—X-ray vision is not a superpower. I'll tell you what is.

This generation

This section is three years old now, all these years we've called ourselves, and our generation, Super.

A bit pompous, isn't it?

One thing that's been said of our generation is that we're too full of ourselves—yeah, we have guts enough to say we're the best people ever.

A big lot of us have online profiles to proclaim our being, and blogs to let people know what we think. Some of us have our own .com's, our own personal shrines.

We do everything in pursuit of our own perverse happiness. We party, and drink, and do extra things just to get our fill.

We're the "Me" generation!

Here's the third secret: Our superpower is "Me."

Is a different generation

The older people are freaked out. They think we're careless, that we have no gods, and all that drama. They hope we'll outgrow this phase.

The fourth secret is that we will outgrow it. But we won't turn into them—we're different.

While all generations go through the "finding themselves" phase in their teens, the difference between this generation and the past is where they look for themselves.

Older generations have looked outward, with X-ray eyes. They've submitted themselves to systems, and norms, and acceptable truths. They've examined society and changed it, but they've made it more complex.

Our generation's looking for our truth too. We're just looking for it somewhere else. Like, in ourselves.

What truth is this? Is it the meaning of life, or whether Jesus ever married? I hate to sound like Confucius, but I think

that the truth is the self. That isn't complex.

See, the more we get lost, the more we screw up, the more we fall, the more times we get up, and the more truth we find—we find more of ourselves.

The more we care about our self, the more we acknowledge our own potential to do—the more we contribute to the world. When we build shrines to our abilities, we build shrines to the world.

We need to know who we are to know how we can change the world around us.

It's the Super generation

I said that X-ray vision isn't a superpower, our generation's concept of "Me" is. But what really makes us Super?

One day we will find ourselves, just like the older generations have. We'll laugh at the things we've done, too. But let's hope we don't resign to the norms we know aren't right. Let's not lose ourselves like many adults have.

To do that, we need to turn "me" into "we." The "Me" generation won't be great unless it's able to find itself, and share it with others.

And don't be distracted by adults who say you're too young, that you're inept, that you can't do. You know you can. We know you can.

You don't have to be pretty. You don't have to be this award-winning, decorated, prodigy from god-knows-where. You don't have to be in media; people don't even have to know you.

For three years, Super has featured young people just like you, who stay true to their powers, and do what they love. There are many of them. We're hoping you'll be one of them in the near future.

Remember, there's just two steps: 1) Look inside yourself, stay true to your insides. 2) Share this wonderful thing with others.

That's our vision—it isn't X-ray—but it's Super.

Third year high

From page D1

what would merely look great on a bumper sticker (or a blog) and what is worthy of a broadsheet. Well, most of the time. Ha.

On true talent versus great PR

So how does one get to manage a piece of real estate in the papers? I've gotten a handful of e-mails with different versions of that subject heading. My honest reply has nonetheless been the same: I paid my dues. I started out as an online columnist for You, Inq7's tween-to-teen-to-twenty-something portal, dispatching nuggets about "The Osbournes" and Ja Rule back in the pre-Paris Hilton days. And along with that, one of my very first articles was published in Candy Magazine. Bet you didn't know that, eh? (Okay, I just dated myself there, but, like, whatever!)

Inasmuch as I'd like to say that I followed the "Looks + Timing = Welcome To The Party" equation, I can't. Because I didn't. As card-carrying members of Generation Me, we may have developed a self-confidence and self-reliance that confounds, and sometimes terrifies, older generations. But we have to remember to mix in some ability into that to get farther and last longer in whatever career path we wish to pursue.

These days, with celebrity becoming easier and easier to obtain and fame and fortune just an audition away, success has never meant less. Stakes are much higher now. It's really up to us to prove to the oldies—and to ourselves, most of all—that scratching our PR-friendly surface will not reveal, like they assume, more surface. To do this requires hard work, and nope, not hard work directed toward self-promotion.

On fanatics and frenemies

Speaking of mail, it's feedback from forward-thinking types that pushes Super ahead. Our modest section owes its legs to those who have cared to drop a few smileys in our inboxes. (That likewise includes our awesomely awesome advertisers, stylists, photographers, artists, and other collaborators. We heart you. Yay!) It sounds totally cheesy—bear with me—but getting positive reactions (any reaction, actually) inspires us. Sniff. Okay, enough of the drama.

Of course, we're also challenged by those who don't look upon the work we do that favorably. To those peeps—surprise!—we'd also like to

say thank you. And please continue talking about us. To paraphrase Radar Magazine, you know you made it when everybody who doesn't like you hates you. It takes a lot to elicit such extreme reactions—"Is it sacrilegious or is it genius?"—and we're Ned Flanders-ishly happy that we've managed to do that in the short period we've been knocking around. (Though honestly, life's way too short to dwell on all the negative razzing so we choose to Photoshop the haters out of our world instead. Peace, mga ate and kuya.)

On the future

If our freshman year was spent showing that we deserve our superla-



tive acronym, and Year 2 was dedicated to sustaining that Super spirit, we will try our darndest to punctuate our third year with idea-motivated creativity that breeds constant reinvention that breeds survival. Whew. Those are musts in this crazy, catty, but cool Pinoy mediasphere.

Anyway, here's to growing up, thinking out loud, and, like, finally rocking the universe! Happy birthday to all of us, the Super generation.

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C2 brews natural green tea leaves gently to retain the antioxidants normally lost in other extraction processes.

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Mandarin for "brewed from natural green tea leaves"

SUPER! SELECTION

Faspitch lights our ears

THERE'S GREAT, NEW STUFF OUTSIDE THE confines of Manila. Take the Cebu music scene. They're rocking like there's no... Manila. And the people there are damn good.

One of the bands you have to hear is called Faspitch.

They released their first album "The Future of Ear Repair" a few weeks ago.

Their music's interesting—they mix abstract metal with drum and bass and old-school grunge. And I'll tell 'ya, based on first-hand experience—they sound like

they're ready for the big time.

The album is far from a letdown. The way they recorded their music is topnotch—they're fresh, but they sound tight enough to be pro.

You can hear them by visiting their Myspace page at <http://myspace.com/faspitch>. If you like their stuff (and there's a big chance you will), you can troop to Cebu to see them live (whooh!) or buy their album online at <http://IndieCultureOnline.com>

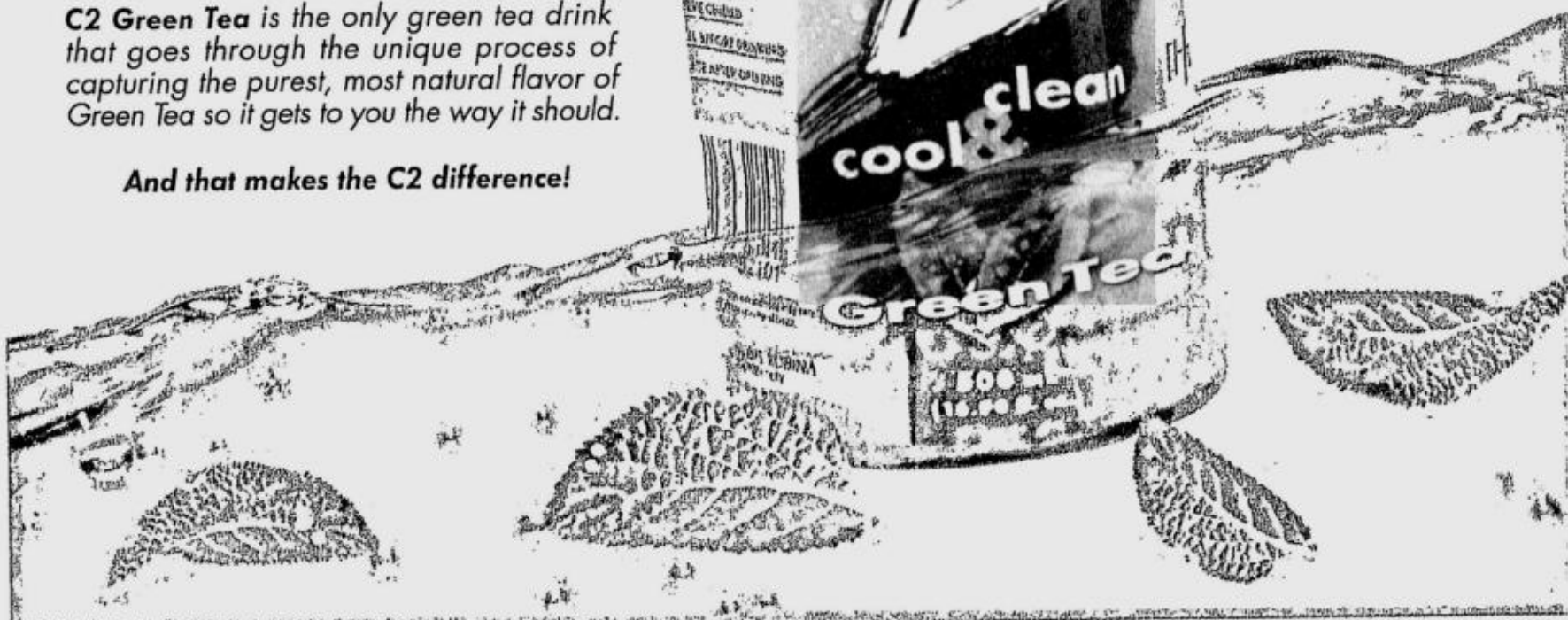
Rakrakan! Sorry, I could not resist.

Pepe Diokno

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And that makes the C2 difference!



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RED, BLACK AND WHITE. Jaja Bolivar and Aaliya Parks

Stars in stripes

FROM SUPERSTARS TO SUPER SERVERS! Famous celebrities took on a different role when they acted as dub-dubs, bartenders and smiley people greeters at T.G.I.Friday's Glorietta branch recently. During that special day, there were no scripts, no take-tvos and no talent fees—it was all about the spirit of volunteerism and the desire to help cancer-stricken children.

"Stars in Stripes" was a fundraising event that gave celebrities the chance to use their popularity to make an impact on society. With the time they spent at T.G.I.Friday's, they were able to help out cancer-stricken kids under the care of UP-PGH's Medical Social Service-Onco Support Group.

T.G.I.Friday's enthusiasts bought tickets which included a raffle stub and a sit-down dinner of Friday's Caesar salad,

Fried Mozzarella, Roasted Chicken, Choco Malt Cake and free flowing iced tea.

With the assistance of Friday's wait staff, acoustic artist Aiza Seguerra (who, together with singer Gian Magdangal, was awarded "Best in pre-bussing"), model-singer Aliyah Parcs ("Best in Festive Hat"), actresses Jana Victoria, Aiza Marquez and Starstruck ultimate survivor Ryza Cenon (who all took home the "Wow Service" titles) provided special Friday's service that night. Also present were sportscaster George Rocha ("Best Runner") and model-actor Derek Ramsey ("Most Requested Service" award). Vanes Del Moral was "Ms Congeniality"; he (together with singer Jimmy Bondoc) was also "Best in Food Safety & Sanitation." Wazzup Wazzup tad-



DEREK Ramsey



HAPPY TOGETHER. Guess which is the artista?



AIZA Seguerra

jocks Jaja and Wallace, actresses Krista Raniolo, Kathleen Hermosa and host Joaquin Valdez also joined in to help. GMA 7's Starstruck idols Dion Ignacio, Johan Santos, Ryza Cenon, Mike Tan, CJ Muere and Megan Young did a great job! Also present to support the cause were world-class scriptwriter Ricky Lee, ace director Dominic Zapanta, and stage performers Chanda Romero and Matt Raniolo III. Drop Science band and another acoustic star Paolo Santos provided the live entertainment.

Proceeds of this event will go directly to the children beneficiaries of the UP-PGH's Medical Social Service-Onco Support Group.

The Tell-tale Heart: Tips for a Healthy Life



Dr. Luisito O. Llido

Dr. Luisito O. Llido, Head of the Nutrition Support Services of St. Luke's Medical Center is an expert in clinical nutrition with a proven track record in the care of the critically-ill like cardiac patients. He would rather help in the prevention of heart disease than see it in its full-blown manifestation. As part of St. Luke's total quality patient care program, Dr. Llido looks at the over-all health status of a patient and recommends simpler and healthier lifestyle change. Here is his prescription for a healthy heart:

Eat right. Making healthy food choices significantly lowers blood pressure and reduces the risk of a heart attack. Loading up on fruits and vegetables, whole grains, nuts and fish keeps the kilos off but your body also needs the right amounts of healthy fat. With high-cholesterol fast food and other convenience items taking up a larger role in the modern diet, you will be better off with balanced nutrition that matches your calorie and protein requirement based on your weight and nutritional assessment.

For obtaining optimum health and maximum productivity, Dr. Llido recommends a balanced diet supplemented with "nutrient-complete" products like Ensure. It provides complete and balanced nutrition and can also be used as a meal replacement to help ward off hypertension, stroke and cardiovascular disease. It gives you the required calories and helps eliminate the "guessing game" associated with fad diets.

Be active. Sedentary lifestyles are the scourge of the modern age. If work and other concerns leave you with no time to exercise, remember that just being physically active doing housework or taking care of the kids already accounts for exercise. So keep moving and do whatever form of exercise is fit for you. Exercise

provides health benefits for the whole body like improving circulation and muscle mass function, repairing body tissues and reducing inflammation, aside from promoting heart protection.

Avoid stress. Studies have shown that emotional and physical stress can also increase oxidative damage from free radicals to the whole body. It also raises your blood pressure and makes you more prone to heart attacks. So make sure you set aside some time for rest and relaxation. Step back from the "fast lane" and engage in relaxing activities like music, reading, enjoying time with your family, or having special hobbies. Your heart will thank you for it.

Have a positive outlook. Studies have shown that people who look at the brighter side of life tend to have better productivity and stable relationships. Married couples with positive relationships tend to live longer.

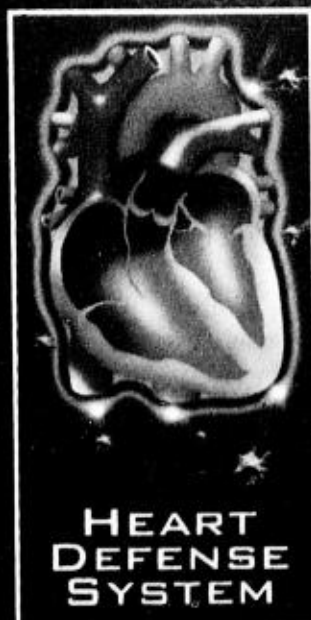
For an effective patient management approach to intensive and comprehensive pre- and post-operative cardiac rehabilitation, more doctors incorporate daily feedings of Ensure.

Ensure is equipped with a heart-defense system rich in antioxidants and low in cholesterol, sodium and saturated fats to assure you of total heart protection. It also has a heart-healthy fat blend that meets the standards set by the American Heart Association.

Dr. Llido was a guest speaker at the Annual Convention of the Philippine Heart Association held on May 26, 2006 at the EDSA Shangri-la Hotel. He delivered a talk with the topic "Cardio-nutrition: Its Impact on the Total Care of a Patient."

Heart protection ENSURED

Recommended by 8 out of 10 doctors and meets standards of the American Heart Association and National Cholesterol Education Program



Your heart is the center of activity in your body. Every part of your system depends on it. If your heart is healthy, your entire body benefits. But if it's not, then your whole body suffers. Your heart is in charge of pumping life-giving blood to your entire body, providing nourishment and oxygen to all the cells in your tissues, organs, muscles and bones. The blood moves from the heart into your arteries, then into tiny tubes called capillaries, and finally into the veins that lead back to your heart.

Although your heart is a powerful organ, it can be damaged by disease and poor living habits like smoking, an unhealthy diet, lack of exercise and stress. All these may weaken your body and hamper your blood circulation.

Ensure helps fight off the harmful effects of free radicals caused by these unhealthy habits. Its unique Heart Defense System creates a shield around your heart to help protect you from an attack.

Combined with proper diet and lifestyle, it helps ensure nothing interferes with the way your heart pumps life-giving blood to the rest of your body.

Ensure's other heart-healthy benefits include:

Low cholesterol - Helps keep your arteries free from plaque and cholesterol build-up, which block the flow of blood.

Low sodium - Helps prevent swelling or edema and reduces blood pressure.

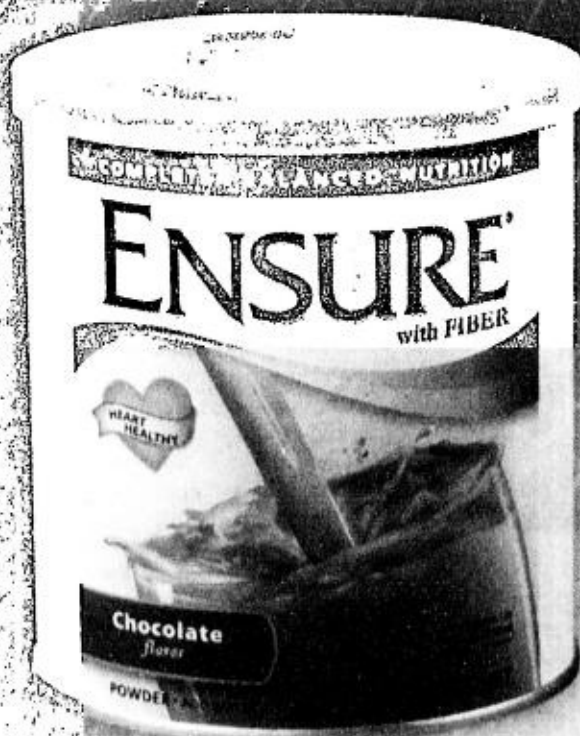
Low saturated fats - Helps block the effects of bad cholesterol and harmful fatty deposits.



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**AQUAMAN. King of the seas,
draws his strength from nature, as powerful as water**

We've got the power

From an army of me to an army of we. There is definitely strength in numbers.

By Gino de la Paz and Pam Pastor

LAST YEAR, WE CELEBRATED Super's second anniversary by giving Pinoy Superiority a push. We wanted people to reach deep within themselves and realize that labels shouldn't stop them, that they should take risks, cross boundaries and

somersault over hurdles to make a mark on the world.

And it seems that Pinoys were listening. Really listening.

Like Leo Oracion, Romi Garduce and Erwin Emata, who proudly waved the colors of the Philippine flag 29,035 feet above sea level.

Like Manny Pacquiao who dodged blows and threw punches to earn yet another boxing title for the motherland. (With all the cash he's won so far, we

think he should be called Money Pacquiao. Excuse the digression; we couldn't resist.)

Like the cast and crew of "Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros" who not only captivated audiences in Manila but tugged at people's hearts from Singapore to Sundance.

Like Ian Gamazon and Neil Dela Llana who made Pinoys proud at this year's Independent Spirit Awards in Hollywood.

Like Jokoy, who wore the Philippine

flag on his jacket when he performed as a guest comedian on "The Tonight Show With Jay Leno." If you don't have a clue who he is yet, Google him, click on his website and prepare to belly laugh.

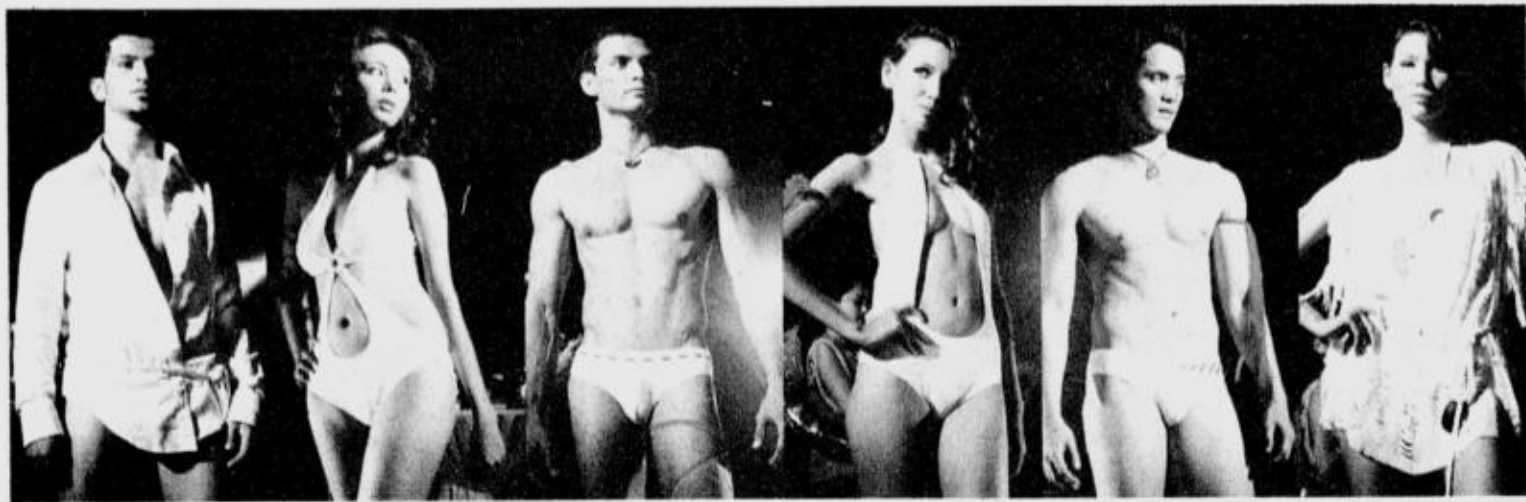
Like Keanna Reeves, who proved that you can win by being your true candid self. That includes peeing in the bushes. We'd like to think she won because viewers found her refreshing, a break from celebrities hellbent on protecting their image with scripted antics.

For sure there are a lot more Filipinos out there who achieved great things for themselves and for the country.

Since we've already proven that we're powerful as individuals, it's time to merge our talents and show our strengths as a generation.

If last year we focused on the "me," on our third anniversary, we want the spotlight on the "we."

Because no matter what cynics and critics may say, we've got the power.



SUMMER collection of Mario Colmenares, Sal Malto and Jun Escario

I get by with a little help from my friends



MEGA's Lorraine Belmonte, JR Isaac and Lifestyle Asia's Sari Yap



LIFESTYLE Network's White Hot Summer host Angel Jacob

From page E1

the weekend was trying to wean me away from my old life through several comfort manifestations.

But what next? It was the second week, approaching the second weekend (and a Mactan Holiday) and although work had picked up the pace a little bit, I still dreaded the long hours of nothing. Before the pangs hit though, fate intervened again. Another friend, (a blonde, always seemingly programmed on hyperdrive one) called me and asked me to take his place at a series of events being thrown at the Shangri-La Mactan by the Lifestyle Network. White Hot Summer was the theme, and it was going to be chockful of activities from a fashion show, a cooking show, a furniture exhibit, a beach party, and the clincher: spa treatments at the newly opened Chi Spa. I looked back at my comfort zone list, everything was met with a check mark. Who could refuse? Needless to say the Lifestyle Network knew how to shake the homesickness blues. The parties were well attended bringing in the fashion and society forerunners in Cebu. While the cooking show had me win a book authored (and later autographed) by guest chef Glenda Barreto. I also



BERNIE and Txabi Aboitiz

saw more old friends from Manila who then introduced me to new friends based in Cebu. It was probably this last "intervention" from the powers that be, or the friends that be that finally jumpstarted by acceptance of my surroundings and my situation. It was almost like a three day farewell party to a life I had gotten accustomed to and a solid welcome to a "new" stage of life.

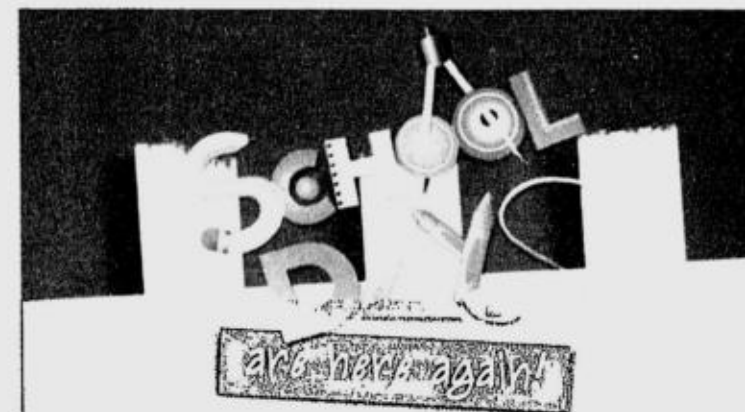
It's been three weeks and there have been changes, but none have been unwelcome. There are adjustments but they only serve to make me realize how adaptable and flexible one can become given the chance to stretch out into new territories. And thank goodness, for interventions.



METRO Magazine's James Ong, Shangri-La Mactan's director of communications Sharon Samarista, Sunstar's Jude Bacalso, The Freeman's Nestor Alonso and Ato Alvarez



ATO and Gigi Alvarez, Luli Arroyo, JR Isaac and Lifestyle Network's managing director Chinky de Jesus



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Is your room filled with sound or stereo equipment? Do you want to change the way you experience digital music? Are you distracted by all these questions? Then spoil those eardrums with the iPod HiFi. Like, now!

Brand new. Speakers of the house

By Gino de la Paz

IT'S A WEE BIT BIGGER THAN a standard toaster, but it sure packs a wallop. I wish someone told me to step back before switching on the iPod HiFi because now, I think I'm partially deaf. Partially deaf but completely awed.

As I learned, well, the hard way, this baby packs enough power to blow your hair back, as if you were listening to a whole wall of speakers. (Well, it didn't help that the first song that blasted out of my iPod was Jason Nevins' remix of N.E.R.D.'s "Rock Star." But still.) The iPod HiFi is really a giant level up from the tinny-sounding Altec Lansing mini speakers I'm used to.

After filling my room with the sweet sound of (free) music, I decided to introduce my new speakers to the other parts of the house. You know, to see if all the media hyperbole was justified. First stop was, uhm, the bathroom where they say the acoustics are fantastic. Verdict? Fantastic! Yeah, I tripped out on slightly weird, artsy, Icelandic sounds from weird, artsy, Icelandic group Sigur Rós ("Sae-glopur"). The HiFi's double-walled plastic shell prevents the speakers from vibrating too much, pouring out a distinctly clatter-free sound. (By the way, if you haven't heard Sigur Rós yet, it's what Narnia sounds like at cocktail hour.)

Since it had hand grips, I was able to lug it around much like a cooler of beer. I parked it in the garden next, to see how my future pool parties would sound. For a taste of bass, I cranked up some old-school dub from Sly & Robbie. The natural bass of the iPod HiFi muscles out of a 130mm woofer and low frequencies—think Benny Benassi's trademark buzzy beats—are boosted even more. (In geek, it's because of the "dual voice coil, ported bass reflex design for bass system." Whatever.) Just add screaming college kids and it's a party! Party!!!

Anyway.

The fuss-free design is also pure Apple. White and just right, the iPod HiFi's look complements anything you put near it, whether it's an Art Deco console in your living room or a Gehry-inspired sandcastle at the beach. (Yup, you can make it your beach blanket boombox 'cause it also runs on six D-cell batteries.) No fugly power bricks here; all the components are tucked internally. Whether you own the chunkier models (like the first generation doorstop, er, iPod or the 30GB Video) or the handier ones (like the Mini and Nano), the iPod HiFi also comes with a full range of universal dock adapters.

And as a bonus for all you lazyasses out there, the iPod HiFi has its own remote control. Only slightly bigger than a lighter, it has the same straightforward appearance and philosophy as a Shuffle. I kinda wish, though, that it had a clickwheel. My right thumb kept on stroking the buttons instead of pushing down as I'm supposed to do. (And while I'm on the subject, what does the menu button do? Hmmm.)

IMO, the iPod HiFi is the best-sounding new-generation sound system in the market today. Rock or dance, soft or loud, Podcasts or otherwise, eargasms are guaranteed!

Log onto www.asia.apple.com for a list of authorized reseller locations.

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Ma. Lerma C. Berido, Negros Occidental
Louie Gee L. Gitgano, Cebu

MINDANAO
Eflida M. Galamiton, Misamis Oriental
Nurhida Ahiron, Zamboanga City

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LUZON
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Ma. Jocelyn Ortega, Pangasinan

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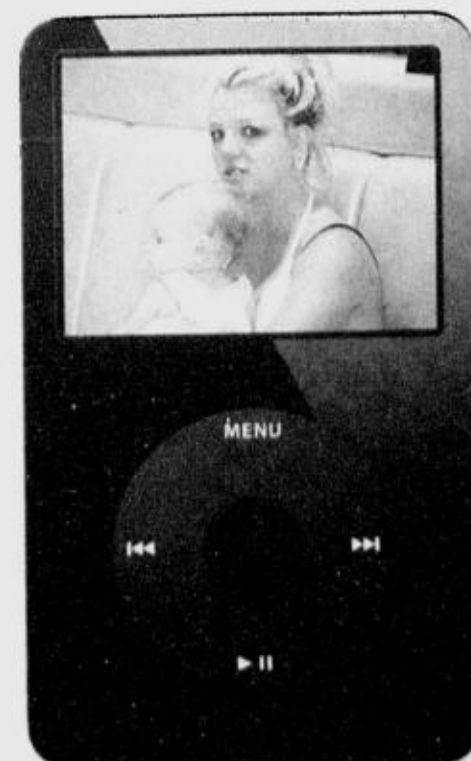
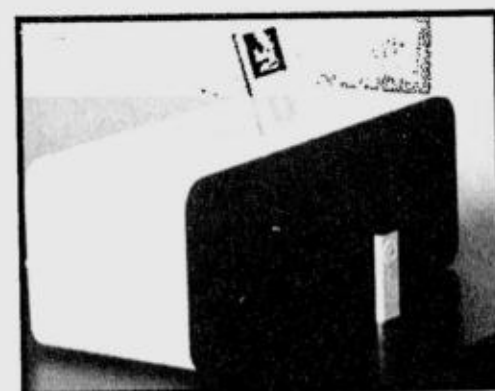
VISAYAS
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Evelyn Anosa, Northern Samar

MINDANAO
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*Puwede ka pang
manalo sa Final Draw.
Until May 31 na lang!*



Fonterra



DROP THIS BABY ONE MORE TIME. Pop your iPod into the built-in universal dock and enjoy

ROADTALK

Take on the road with Volvo's travel safety tips

WHETHER HEADED TO THE BEACH OR TO THE nearest getaway spot, Volvo packs a helpful dose of hints to make the road trip safer and stress-free.

Most likely, families and friends plan road trips to their favored destinations in the country to experience a brief respite from the daily grind. For those taking the roads, their cars will be their home away from home, offering the best comfort available and making the journey more worthwhile.

Whether travelers are ensconced in the comforts of their Volvos or any other car, it is top-of-mind to experience stress-free driving and arrive at their destination smiling and ready to enjoy. The following are helpful tips to make the drive hassle, stress and worry-free.

- **Know your route.** Plan and map a quicker route, research the road you want to take. Knowing where the nearest gas station and establishments are located may be convenient for those emergency stops. Keep a map on the glove compartment, just in case you get lost.

- **Head out early.** Drive out a few hours earlier, maybe a day to beat the holiday crowd. You don't want to spend half the time getting stuck in the traffic jam.

- Pack an emergency kit. Bring a handy first-aid medical kit with some lozenges, headache and motion sickness pills. It may come in handy especially if you're driving long hours.

- Bring some fun along. Pack some on-road entertainment with CDs, audio books or a personalized play list to keep you from dozing off while driving. Got kids on the backseat? Pack some games and toys for the little ones to keep them from boredom and tantrums. You could make a list of "car games" to play with them once you hit the road.

- **Check your car's papers.** Make sure your plates, registration and insurance information are all valid. Keep important numbers handy in your car. While you're at it, see to it that your driver's license hasn't expired.

- Get your car cleaned. You'll feel much better driving the distance in a clean car.

- **Fill and change.** Don't wait until the last minute to gas up and change the oil. Driving on a full tank saves you the time of lining up

OFWs get special deals from Honda

HONDA CARS PHILIPPINES INC (HCPI) IS giving Filipinos working abroad the chance to provide their families back home a brand new Honda car with the launch of the Honda CAREmittance Program.

CAREmitance allows overseas Filipino workers worldwide to buy a brand new Honda car in the Philippines through cash or loan payments with partner banks RCBC, RCBC Savings Bank, BPI and BPI Family Savings Bank.

Honda CAREmittance buyers may place their orders online through www.hondaphil.com or fill in application forms available at participating banks' remittance centers and their tie-ups. Interested parties may just log on to HCP's website and choose their preferred car model or visit the nearest participating bank to avail themselves of this pioneering program from Honda.

"This is another first for Honda. We know a lot of hard-working Filipinos abroad would appreciate that Honda has finally given them the opportunity to show their families back in the Philippines how much they care for them. This is a good way to let their families know that they have their safety and convenience in mind even if they have to work far from home," said Arnel Doria, HCPI deputy head for marketing.

Cash buyers may fill out Honda CAREmitance application forms online or in brochures available at any RCBC Telemoney Center and tie-ups or at BPI Express Remittance Centers and tie-ups anywhere in the world and send to caremitance@hondaphil.com. Upon confirmation of order, payments may be made through the said partner remittance centers. Honda will then inform beneficiaries of the delivery of their brand new car.

Car loan applicants may also fill out online forms and send to caremittance@hondaphil.com together with the following documentary requirements authenticated by the Philippine Consulate in their area: a) latest Income Tax Return; b) Certificate of Employment; c) Special Power of Attorney; and d) Exit Pass. A Proof of Remittance is also required. Correspondence will be done through e-mail while family members will also be updated of the status of loan applications. Payments and monthly installments may be coursed through the chosen bank, RCBC Tele-money Centers or BPI Express Remittance Centers worldwide.

CAREmittance buyers also get free LTO registration for three years including hydrophilic paint protector to keep the car glossy for a long time. Standard dealer freebies such as tint, floor mat and seat cover also apply. Visit www.hondaphil.com now or see posters and flyers for more details. CAREmittance may be reached at 857-7253.

for gas with the holiday traffic.

- Give your car a pre-travel checkup. You don't want your car heating up or conking out in the middle of the road, so bring it to a customer service center to make sure your tires are sturdy, your lights are all working, and your car's filters, belts and fluid levels are in tiptop shape.

To add to these travel tips, more good news is in store for Volvo owners. A Volvo Customer Service Summer Package is made available until May 30. Before hitting the road and making new adventures with their Volvos, clients can drive by the nearest Volvo Customer Service Center for a pre-road trip maintenance check-up. A 20-percent discount is

given to all those who will avail themselves of any of the six packages available that includes the Keep It Cool Package (cooling system check-up), Sure Stop Package (braking system check-up), Clean Air Package (aircon system clean-up), Safe Traction Package (tire check and replacement), Steering System Package, and Suspension System Package. For as low as P3,324, clients can have the peace of mind that their Volvo will run smoothly mile after mile, giving outstanding performance while offering creature comforts to the hilt. A special Volvo gift awaits clients who avail themselves of the summer packages. What's more, because it's a Volvo, you'll enjoy the drive more knowing you and your loved

ones are safe and protected.

In Manila, Viking Cars Inc. is the official distributor of Volvo cars. The Volvo Makati office, showroom and Aftersales service center are located at 2272 Chino Roces Avenue, Makati City while Volvo Ortigas Center is located at 88 ADB Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City. Volvo Cebu is located at AS Fortuna Street, Banilad, Mandaue City. The 2006 Volvo automobile line includes the compact All-New S40 and V50 Sportswagon, sporty S60, the flagship S80 luxury sedan, the rugged XC70 Cross Country and the award-winning XC90 AWD. For details and inquiries, call 893-6621 to 22 (Makati Showroom) or 637-0414 to 17 (Ortigas Showroom).

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1.8L i-VTEC Engine
180 hp, 170 lb-ft torque

Multiplex Meter

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Powerful Integrated Audio Component

Dual Tinted Windows

Visit any authorized dealers for details.

Model

Civic LX 180 hp, 170 lb-ft torque, 24/34 mpg, 18" alloy wheels, dual tinted windows, steering wheel audio controls with paddle shifts, dual color blue leather seats, powerful integrated audio component.

Civic EX 180 hp, 170 lb-ft torque, 24/34 mpg, 18" alloy wheels, dual tinted windows, steering wheel audio controls with paddle shifts, dual color blue leather seats, powerful integrated audio component.

Civic Si 200 hp, 170 lb-ft torque, 24/34 mpg, 18" alloy wheels, dual tinted windows, steering wheel audio controls with paddle shifts, dual color blue leather seats, powerful integrated audio component.

Options

Navigation System 180 hp, 170 lb-ft torque, 24/34 mpg, 18" alloy wheels, dual tinted windows, steering wheel audio controls with paddle shifts, dual color blue leather seats, powerful integrated audio component.

Bluetooth 180 hp, 170 lb-ft torque, 24/34 mpg, 18" alloy wheels, dual tinted windows, steering wheel audio controls with paddle shifts, dual color blue leather seats, powerful integrated audio component.

Backup Camera 180 hp, 170 lb-ft torque, 24/34 mpg, 18" alloy wheels, dual tinted windows, steering wheel audio controls with paddle shifts, dual color blue leather seats, powerful integrated audio component.

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test of the ISO. Thule is the only accredited OEM designer in the local market and is a proud supplier of load carriers for brands such as Ford, Volvo, Land Rover, Nissan, Toyota, GM, BMW and Mercedes Benz.

All Thule roof racks and boxes are water proof and theft proof. The aerodynamic design provides a sleek look to the vehicle. Shown is a Chevrolet Optra Estate equipped with a Thule roof box system. For more information on how to gear up and make your vacation a more adventurous one, load up and visit their display at Toyota Pasong Tamo or the Thule-EGR Showrooms in Ortigas Avenue (744-6367) and Pasong Tamo (892-7847) or log on to www.thule.com.

PETRON CORP RECENTLY ANNOUNCED the six teams who have been pre-qualified and chosen as the official entries to the Petron Xtra Mile Challenge. Set to run from May 31 to June 2, the event challenges ordinary motorists to break the record of 1,114 km on one full tank of Petron Xtra Unleaded set by racing legend Pocholo Ramirez last year.

Out of the pool of applicants who registered online or through application forms at Petron service stations, the teams who made it to the "Magic Six" are:

Team de Perio. A young married couple working in Makati, Mark Jim and Romina de Perio practice fuel-efficient driving techniques daily to keep within their budget. The De Perios will be representing Metro Manila.

Team R(2). Good friends Raymond Young and Randolph Mencias are eco-run enthusiasts, having participated in a number of these events. Raymond is an IT professional, while Randolph is a dental technician/student. They will also be representing Metro Manila.

The 37th Team. Representing Northern Luzon, married couple Michael and Mary Grace Asuncion achieved 37.14 km/liter in an eco-run challenge they joined earlier this year. Based in Aliaga, Nueva Ecija, the Asuncions have made fuel efficiency driving a part of

their lifestyle.

Team AR. Well-known TV host ("AutoReview") and sportscaster Ron de los Reyes and his co-host Julienne Cruz also want to be a part of the challenge. This time, they want to be part of the news, not just cover it. Ron has his roots in Pangasinan, while Julienne is from Zambales. The team will also represent Northern Luzon.

Team Eco-Run. Joanna Antonio and Randy Ravena both work for Honda car dealerships. Joanna is an HR officer with Honda Cars Makati while Randy is a sales executive at Honda Cars Shaw. Joanna hails from Bacoor, Cavite, so the team will be running for Southern Luzon.

Zayco Hermanos. Brothers Emilio and Emmanuel Zayco are from Kabankalan, Negros Occidental and will be carrying the torch for the Visayas. Both run their own businesses and are 4x4 enthusiasts.

The public will have a chance to cheer for their favorite team through a "Vote for Your Team" text-in raffle promo. At stake are six 3G-enabled phones from Smart and six free PLDT myDSL connections for six months. Voters can also follow the teams' progress and vote online at www.petronfuelsuccess.com.

The Petron Xtra Mile Challenge is supported by Honda Cars Philippines Inc, PLDT WeRoam, PLDT myDSL, and Smart 3G.



Special P

The MB B-Class The Compact



WITH THIS NOVEL SPORTS TOURER CONCEPT, Mercedes-Benz is once again asserting its role as the trendsetter among car brands and preparing the way for a young market segment with a promising future. The B-Class meets the wishes of today's motorists for a car with generous space, exemplary comfort, excellent practicality, an exciting design and a high level of driving pleasure. This new Mercedes development takes the advantages of different vehicle concepts and combines them into an interesting and distinctive profile of its own: as a Compact Sports Tourer, the B-Class is a touring, family and recreational vehicle with incomparable added experience value in terms of design and dynamism.

One of the major advantages of the Compact Sports Tourer is the sandwich concept developed by Mercedes-Benz. Thanks to the space-saving arrangement of the engine and transmission partly in front of and partly beneath the passenger cell, the new B-Class offers the interior spaciousness of larger saloons and estate cars despite its compact external dimensions. The body has a length of 4270 mm, corresponding to the compact car class. Inside, however, the new Mercedes model offers more than other cars of comparable size in this segment in all comfort-related respects, e.g. shoulder-room, legroom and headroom.

Occupants in the rear benefit from the long wheelbase (2778 mm); this allows a distance between seats and generous knee-room which almost matches that in the S-Class. The B-Class also reaches new dimensions where variability and load capacity are concerned. Thanks to a height-adjustable load compartment floor, an asymmetrically divided, folding and removable rear seat unit plus an optionally removable front passenger seat, the Compact Sports Tourer is

Hyundai re the Corolla

THE DARING TEAM OF CHALLENGERS composed of motoring journalists and automotive experts from Roadwise Motoring Foundation led by director Vip Isada look revved up to conquer the rough northern terrain of the Cordilleras and Ilocos region as they pose with Leica Valenciano-Holt and Maria Fe Perez-Agudo, marketing manager and executive vice president and chief operating officer, respectively, of Hyundai Asia Resources Inc.

Through the "Hyundai Dares: The Cordillera Challenge", a grueling four-day road run of its CRDi-powered vehicles, namely the Getz, Matrix, Accent, Tucson and Starex, Hyundai formally embarks on yet another milestone in its continuing effort to provide its customers with vehicles that will meet the demands of their changing lifestyles.

At the official kick off ceremony Tuesday, May 23, Maria Fe Perez-Agudo, EVP and COO of Hyundai Asia Resources Inc, stated that, "The Cordillera Challenge promises to be a true test of performance for our vehicles and it is a dare that we are confident to triumph over."

"Fuel efficiency is a brand value our CRDi-powered cars have been able to deliver to our customers through the years. Now, we would like to drive home the message that our edge lies also in the power, endurance and reliability of all our cars."



Great outdoors. Exciting indoors.

The new B-Class.
A new dimension in practical luxury.



► Why hasn't anyone ever thought of it? A car that combines the characteristics of various vehicle concepts, and reinvents them all in

a completely new idea: the Compact Sports Tourer.

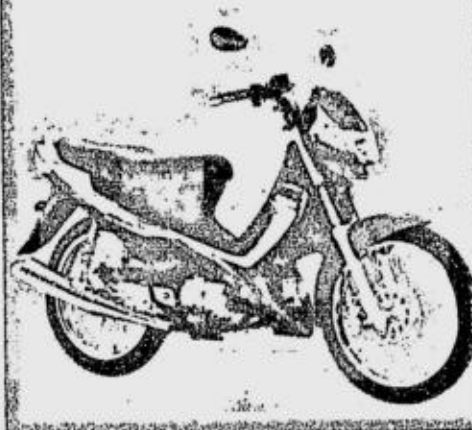
► At only 4.27m in length, the B-Class boasts generous space that's enough for 3 passengers comfortably seated in the back. Its adjustable seating means adjustable storage capacity for anything from mountain bikes and golf bags, to crates of food and supplies and

anything in between.

► The new B-Class Compact Sports Tourer. A new dimension in practical luxury.



Mercedes-Benz



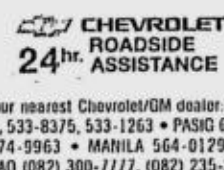
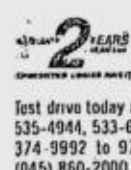
Suzuki launches the new lifestyle model The Raider J

SUZUKI LAUNCHES THE NEWEST lifestyle motorcycle model, the Raider J. Stroke Sport. Designed for sporty freedom, the model derives inspiration from the championship-winning GSX-R superbike and follows the race-replica concept of the Suzuki Raider 125 and the Raider 600, which are coveted models by motor sports clubs and individual enthusiasts.

The model's sporty and aggressive design, integrated engine lower cowling and aggressive design adorned with race-inspired details to make the Raider J a sight to behold on the street. Power comes from a robust high-torque large bore V-twin engine for instant responsive power at the flick of a wrist. At the same time, the model is easy on the pocket with its high fuel efficiency and easy on the environment as it conforms to Euro 3 emission standard.

As a sporty, fashionable, tough and well-priced motorcycle, the Raider J offers a totally new lifestyle to the rider. An active fun lifestyle full of confidence and pride when riding the motorcycle. It is a vision to start a new Philippine way of life on the road within the reach of everyone. For bike enthusiasts or beginners alike, never has the future of motorcycling been as bright or open as more possibilities than with the arrival of the latest motorcycle lifestyle phenomenon, the Suzuki Raider.

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The New 2006 Chevrolet Trailblazer EXT is equipped with StabiliTrak that calibrates en
4.2 L VORTEC ENGINE • NEW FRONT AND REAR FASCIA • NEW GRILLE • NEW HEADLAMPS • NEW BODY

PROJECT

Class: Sports Tourer



quickly and easily converted from a comfortable touring car to a practical van. In addition, the design and feel of the interior features complement each other, creating an atmosphere in which the occupants are immediately at ease to enjoy the high level of long-distance comfort.

Top-class technology

Innovations in the field of suspension technology have contributed greatly to a successful combination of agility, safety and comfort with all these attributes enjoying equal importance.

The improved Electronic Stability Program (ESP) now has a new, additional function: the Steer Control steering assistance system. This operates in tandem with the electromechanical power steering system, providing the appropriate servo assistance in critical handling situations to help the driver stabilize the vehicle when braking on road surfaces offering less grip on one side than the other. The new ESP function also helps with steering corrections and provides the driver with better road contact.

As a further special feature included as standard, the suspension of the Compact Sports Tourer has a new, selective damping system which adapts the shock absorber response to the current driving situation. A soft shock absorber configuration ensures a high level of ride comfort during normal driving, but switches to maximum damping force when taking bends at speed to give the B-Class maximum stability.

Test-drive the new Mercedes-Benz B-Class. For inquiries, call Mercedes-Benz Global City at 815-7777 or Mercedes-Benz Greenhills at 723-5808 or visit www.mercedes-benz.com.ph. CATS Motors is the general distributor of Mercedes-Benz passenger cars and commercial vehicles.

How to rock tiller



That is why we at Hyundai are excited about taking on this new and exciting challenge of pushing our vehicles to an extreme test of performance. A feat, as far as I know, other automotive brands in the country have not taken to its full length," added Perez-Agudo.

The full course and length of the "Hyundai Dares: The Cordillera Challenge" was mapped out for Hyundai by motoring expert Isada. It covers an 'exhausting and demanding campaign that traverses a variety of terrains from flat lands, winding and steep, uphill climbs to rough and narrow roads. The taxing route from Manila to Baguio, Banawe, and Sagada in the Cordilleras and onto Pagudpud and Vigan in the Ilocos and then back to Manila will prove the maneuverability, versatility, and reliability of the Hyundai cars.

Enoc gears up in RP

EMIRATES NATIONAL OIL COMPANY (Enoc) LLC, in coordination with CKW Enterprises, its official distributor of motor oils in the Philippines, unveiled a landmark development in the marketing of the Enoc Lubricants range with a complete packaging revamp aimed at boosting its marketing power and challenging major international players.

Recently, CKW Enterprises unveiled this new look with a grand new packaging launch at the Crowne Plaza hotel. The event was well-attended, from the top Enoc officers and directors from Dubai, to distributors and agents from all over the country. The guests were treated to world-class entertainment and delectable gourmet treats for the palate.

The grandiose event, the first for Enoc in the country, was truly reflective of the world-class image Enoc is trying to achieve. Hosted by the country's top comedienne and television personality Tuesday Vargas, the night featured many surprises including a musical extravaganza, a raffle wherein winners got to take home motorcycle bikes and more, and the most-awaited unveiling of the new packaging of Enoc lubricants.

The wholly owned government of Dubai group has invested heavily in a powerful repackaging overhaul-the first since the launch of its lubricants brand seven years ago-aimed at repositioning Enoc lubricants as an international high quality brand.

"This dynamic new look followed intensive research among all stakeholders," said Hussain Sultan, group chief executive and board member, Enoc. "We believe the quality of our lubricants is such that the time is right to challenge other major international players in the market."

The new look of Enoc Lubricants' packaging and labeling is designed to reflect the modernity and towering impact of Dubai worldwide and its integral values of delivering speed, purpose and premium products. The brand icon of Enoc is more prominent, the physical structure of the packaging more aerodynamic with a refined pouring angle to prevent spillage.

"This new, world-class image is a visual demonstration of our determination to be up there with the best," said Kamal Said, chief operating officer, Enoc International Sales. "In commissioning this overhaul we have been driven by our desire to build an international lubricants brand."

The new Enoc Lubricants packaging image was conceived by international identity consultants Landor and follows extensive focus group testing among a range of stakeholders, including end users.

"We are confident that the new look will enhance Enoc's brand competitiveness, keeping us ahead of the competition, reflecting a promise of trust emanating from a region associated with oil production and delivering the quality of performance excellence synonymous with Dubai," added George Garcia, general manager, CKW Enterprises.

"Our aim is to make the Enoc Lubricants' brand a quality flagship for Dubai and the United Arab Emirates," said Mohammed Sadek, manager, Enoc Lubricants. Enoc Lubricants are sold in more than 20 countries in the Middle East, CIS, Africa and Asia Pacific. CKW Enterprises were officially appointed as Enoc exclusive Philippines distributor since 2003.

"With CKW Enterprises, we are demonstrating to our customers in Philippines our loud commitment to deliver quality product and service" added Sadek.

Established in 1998, Enoc Lubricants has a wide variety of branded automotive, industrial lubricants product developed to suit market demands. Its flagship products-the Protec gasoline engine oil range and Vulcan diesel engine oil range-are blended at ISO-9002 certified facilities in Dubai and available in packs of different shapes and sizes with tamper-proof aluminum foil seals for added consumer protection.

Combining fuel efficiency, safety with 'right size' SUV formula

THE 2006 DODGE DURANGO ADDS several state-of-the-art technologies and conveniences, setting itself apart, again, from the crowded SUV market. The 2006 Dodge Durango offers all the power, capability and style with advances in fuel efficiency and safety-including Chrysler Group's Multi-Displacement System (MDS) and Electronic Stability Program (ESP) - that customers expect from a modern SUV.

"The 2006 Dodge Durango once more sets new standards for comfort, efficiency and safety, while living up to the 'utility' promise of sport-utility vehicles," said Darryl Jackson, vice president-Dodge marketing, Chrysler Group. "With best-in-class power, the ability to tow 8,950 pounds, seating for eight passengers and a host of new technologies and amenities, the Dodge Durango offers the ultimate combination of features in the right-size SUV."

A significant contributor to Dodge Durango's improved fuel efficiency is MDS technology, which is now standard on the 2006 Dodge Durango's 5.7-liter HEMI V-8 engine.

The 2006 Dodge Durango also features a Clean Fuel option for the 4.7-liter V-8 engine, which provides fleet customers the adaptability of operating their Durango on ethanol, gasoline or any mixture of the two.

Also new for the 2006 Dodge Durango is a power rear liftgate,



SUV/F4

THE 2006 DODGE DURANGO

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Per DTI-MCR Permit No. A3-0371 Series of 2006

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Special PROJECT

Combining fuel efficiency, safety with 'right size' SUV formula

From page F3

three-passenger third-row 60/40 seat, remote start, Tip Start, two new 18-inch wheel options and standard 17-inch aluminum wheels.

The 2006 Dodge Durango is available in three trim levels: SXT (replaces ST), SLT and Limited. In addition, the Adventurer package, introduced in 2005, is also available for 2006.

Multi-Displacement System

With the 5.7-liter HEMI V-8, the Dodge Durango is the most powerful large SUV on the market. For 2006 that esteemed power is available with maximum fuel economy through Chrysler Group's Multi-Displacement System.

"The Multi-Displacement System incorporated with the Dodge Durango's HEMI engine turns off four of the eight cylinders when the engine is under a light load such as cruising down the highway to conserve energy," said Mike Donoughe, vice president-body-on-frame product team, Chrysler Group. "The most amazing attribute to this system is how invisibly it operates. The Hemi can transition from eight cylinders to four in 40 milliseconds. Dodge Durango customers will now realize the fuel-efficiency benefits of MDS without sacrificing power and torque."

Electronic Stability Program

New on the 2006 Dodge Durango is Chrysler Group's

Electronic Stability Program, a feature available on all of Chrysler Group's 2006 SUVs. ESP aids the driver in maintaining vehicle directional stability by providing oversteer and understeer control, to maintain vehicle behavior on road surfaces.

To optimize overall driving performance, ESP helps the driver maintain directional stability in rain, snow, ice or on dry pavement. The standard Anti-lock Brake System (ABS) is equipped with electronic sensors that help to prevent wheel lockup, and provides excellent stability and maneuverability during braking on virtually every type of road surface.

Perfect blend of size, power

The 2006 Dodge Durango has the interior room, towing and hauling capability of a large SUV, but achieves the fuel efficiency, performance and handling of smaller full-size SUVs.

The 230 hp (175 kW) 4.7-liter Magnum V-8 engine is standard on all four-wheel drive Dodge Durangos. With 290 lb.-ft. of torque (393 Nm), the 4.7-liter provides smooth and responsive performance.

The award-winning HEMI's 335 hp (257 kW) and 370 lb.-ft. of torque (509 Nm) provides more than ample power for towing and hauling, and is mated to a five-speed automatic transmission. The 5.7-liter HEMI V-8 engine is avail-

able on the 2006 Dodge Durango SLT, Adventurer and Limited models. "With a powerful V-6 Magnum engine as standard, an optional 4.7-liter Magnum V-8 and the class-leading HEMI V-8, the 2006 Dodge Durango has a lineup of engines that can't be matched," said Donoughe. "Unsurpassed in acceleration and towing, the 2006 Dodge Durango gives our customers exactly what they want."

2006 Dodge Durango models with either the 4.7-liter V-8 or 5.7-liter HEMI V-8 offer a "Tow/Haul" transmission feature that provides crisp shifts and reduces gear searching when towing by holding the lower gear longer. The system will also select a lower gear under downhill conditions to utilize the engine's braking capability.

Interior roominess and flexibility

The 2006 Dodge Durango interior is simple, roomy and user-friendly with a functional, yet elegant design. With best-in-class cargo capacity, offering a best-in-class 68.4 cu. ft. of cargo room with the third-row seats folded, Dodge Durango easily surpasses other full-size SUVs.

Smooth ride

The 2006 Dodge Durango features a smooth and quiet ride, with precise handling-benefits of the Dodge Durango's torsionally stiff hydroformed frame and independent

front suspension with rack and pinion steering.

"The Dodge Durango features a fully hydroformed frame and chassis that is unique to Durango," said Donoughe. "We have delivered an exceptional-handling SUV that delivers a refined driving experience, whether it's during a trip to the grocery store or a family vacation. In the crowded SUV market, the 2006 Dodge Durango's smooth ride truly distinguishes itself from the pack."

Dodge Durango's smooth ride is also the result of a unique rear suspension with coil springs and a solid rear axle that delivers durability, payload and best-in-class towing capability. A Watt linkage system is fitted to the rear axle, centering the axle and reducing rear-end skate over rough surfaces. The rear suspension supports a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) of 6,600 pounds and towing capacity of 8,950 pounds.

Five-star safety rating

The Dodge Durango was awarded a Five-Star frontal impact rating by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) in 2005. New for 2006 is a roll-sensing side-curtain air bag system that uses sensors to keep side-curtain air bags deployed longer in rollovers.

The Dodge Durango's hydroformed and fully boxed frame provides excellent crash protection. In addition, octagonal front frame rail tips with patented crush initiators are designed to consistently absorb frontal impacts.

Standard on the 2006 Dodge Durango is an advanced air bag system that includes dual-stage front air bags and an occupant-sensing system for the passenger-side front air bag. All seats in the Dodge Durango feature three-point shoulder belts, including a center-mounted, three-point shoulder belt incorporated into the second-row seating area.

Dodge Durango Limited

The 2006 Dodge Durango Limited is a premium model and includes heated auto-dimming side mirrors, power liftgate, premium instrument panel bezel, air conditioning with automatic temperature control, luxury floor mats, memory system for radio, driver seat, mirrors, air conditioning and adjustable pedals, auto-dimming rearview mirror, front heated bucket seats with premium leather, a second-row reclining 40/20/40 folding seat, power front passenger seat, AM/FM stereo radio with six-disc in-dash CD and MP3 player, eight premium speakers with subwoofer, steering wheel-mounted audio controls, Electronic Stability Program (ESP), 18-inch cast aluminum wheels, security alarm and Sentry Key engine immobilizer.

Optional equipment for the 2006 Dodge Durango Limited includes AM/FM stereo radio with navigation system and six-disc in-dash CD/DVD player, UConnect hands-free communications system with Bluetooth wireless technology and 18-inch chrome-clad aluminum wheels.

The 2006 Dodge Durango is built at the Newark Assembly Plant in Newark, Delaware.

For more inquiries, call Chrysler Greenhills at 723-5808 or visit www.chrysler.com.ph. CATS Motors is the general distributor of Chrysler, Jeep and Dodge vehicles.

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No.: 2875 series of 2006

Hyundai Starex champion anew



HYUNDAI STAREX, THE REIGNING FAMILY van in the country, bagged yet another prestigious accolade when it won this year's Full Size Van of the Year award in the recently concluded Petron Xtra Unleaded 2006 Autofocus Automobile & Motorcycle of the Year-People's Choice Awards.

After three months of electronic polls via e-mail and SMS, and three weekends of grand exhibit at The Fort in Taguig City, the contenders underwent an intense voting where one number-one vote per category and one e-mail-one vote per category system was put in place to veto duplicated votes.

Voted by the Car of the Year Group in 2004 as the Van of the Year and again in 2005 as 1st runner-up in the Entry Level MPV, the Hyundai Starex continues to pave the way for the influx of more technically advanced and ergonomically optimized Hyundai vehicles in the Philippines.



Department Store

They're everywhere! The global growth of a retail icon

A DEPARTMENT STORE IS A RETAIL establishment which specializes in selling a wide range of products without a single predominant merchandise line. Department stores usually sell products including apparel, furniture, appliances, and additionally select other lines of products such as paint, hardware, toiletries, cosmetics, photographic equipment, jewelry, toys, and sporting goods. Certain department stores are further classified as discount department stores. Discount department stores commonly have central customer checkout areas, generally in the front area of the store. Department stores are usually part of a retail chain of many stores situated around a country or several countries.

Roots in Russia, France, Canada

Hudson's Bay Company in Canada was the first store to include departments; however, by modern standards, it would not be considered a department store because of the size and range of items that were stocked. The same may be said about Gostiny Dvor in St Petersburg, which opened in 1785 and should probably be regarded as the one of the first purposely built shopping malls in the world, as it consisted of more than 100 shops covering an area of over 53,000 sqm.

The first true department store was founded by Aristide Boucicaut in Paris. He founded Bon Marché in 1838, and by 1852 it offered a wide variety of goods in "departments" inside one building. Goods were sold at fixed prices, with guarantees allowing exchanges and refunds. By the end of the 19th century, Georges Dufayel, a French credit merchant, had served up to 3 million customers and was affiliated with La Samaritaine, a large French department store established in 1870 by a former Bon Marché executive.

The oldest independent department store in the world, until it was recently purchased by House of Fraser, was Jenners in Edinburgh, Scotland, which has maintained its original position on Edinburgh's Princes Street since 1838.

In New York City in 1846, Alexander Turney Stewart established the Marble Palace on the east-Broadway, between Chambers and Reade streets. He offered European retail merchandise at fixed prices on a variety of dry goods, and advertised a policy of providing "free entrance" to all potential customers. Though it was clad in white marble to look like a Renaissance palazzo, the building's cast iron construction permitted large plate glass windows. In 1862 Stewart built a department store on a full city block at Broadway and 9th Street, opposite Grace Church, with eight floors and 19 departments of dress goods and furnishing materials, carpets, glass and china, toys and sports equipment, ranged around a central glass-covered court. Within a couple of decades, New York's retail center had moved uptown, forming a stretch of retail shopping from Marble Palace that was called the "Ladies' Mile". In 1858 Rowland Hussey Macy founded Macy's as a dry goods store. Benjamin Altman and Lord & Taylor soon competed with Stewart as New York's first department stores, later followed by McCreary's and, in Brooklyn, Abraham & Straus (The Straus family would be in the management of both Macy's and A&S).

Similar developments were under way in London (with Whiteleys) and in Paris (with La Samaritaine) and in Chicago, where department stores sprang up along State Street, notably Marshall Field and Company, which remains the second-largest store in the world (after Macy's).

On March 1, 1869 Zion's Cooperative Mercantile Institution was opened in Salt Lake City as a new community store that became the first incorporated department store in America in 1870. A new 3-story brick and iron store was built in 1876, noted for its unique architecture and striped awnings. This store was replaced by an enclosed shopping center in 1973, and the new Zion department store preserved the gilt-edged ornate facade of the old store. In 1999 the May Department Stores bought a 14-store ZCMI chain and changed its name to Meier & Frank, a May property with eight stores in Oregon and Washington.

By 1890 a new world of retailing had been created as department stores had a clear market position as universal providers. General stores eventually became department stores as small towns



FURNITURE arranged the way you envision them at home is now a usual sight in department stores. Shown is an Abea outlet in Walter Mart.



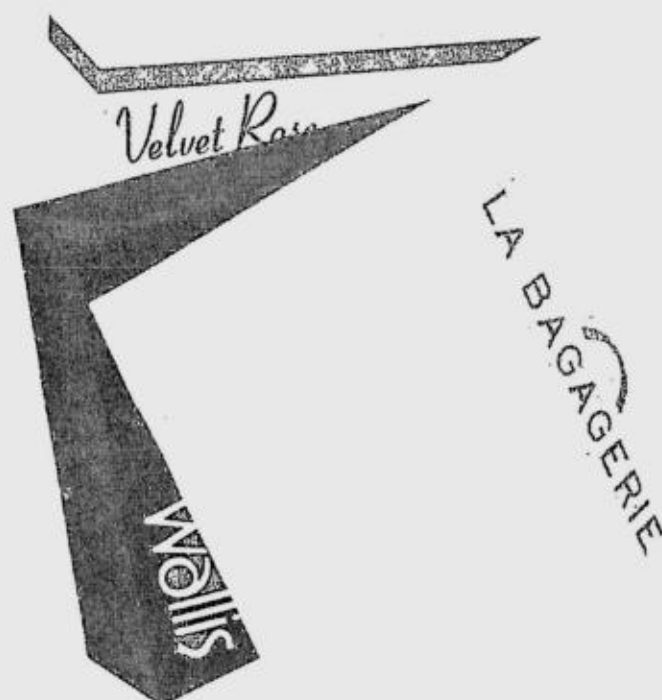
BIG-NAME brands, such as this Nike Park outlet in Paseo de Sta Rosa in Laguna, compete head-to-head with other brands in a department-store setting



MALLS have grown in their physical dimensions to such a point that an al fresco ambiance can be achieved in their restaurants. This Segafredo outlet is inside The Podium.

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participating retail partners from May 12 to June 12, 2006, you will receive a "gifts of indulgences" cash voucher worth P300.00, which you can use on your next visit at the same issuing store up to June 12, 2007.*

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. A3-0385, Series of 2006



Special PROJECT

They're everywhere! The global growth of a retail icon

From page G1

became cities. The most prominent department stores emerged from small shops. The department store created several of North America's first large businesses. The department store is also largely responsible for the standard store design seen today, because of its size it required new building materials, glass technology and new heating, amongst other architectural innovations. The store layouts made shopping easier for consumers irrespective of their social or economic background. The department store also offered new customer services never before seen such as restaurants, restrooms, reading rooms, home delivery, wrapping services, store hours, new types of merchandise displays, and so forth.

Some department stores leased space to individual merchants, along the lines of the new change in late 17th-century London, but by 1900 the smaller companies were purchased or eventually replaced by the larger companies. In some ways they were very similar to our modern malls, where the property owner

has no direct interest in the actual department store itself, other than to collect rent and provide utilities. Today only the most specialized departments are leased out. This could include photography and photo finishing, automotive services, or financial services. However this is rare, even a store's restaurant is usually run by the department store itself today.

Before the 1950s the department store held an eminent place in both Canada and Australia, during both the Great Depression and World War II. However, since then they have suffered from strong competition from specialist stores. Most recently the competition has intensified further with the advent of larger scale superstores. However competition was not the only reason for the department stores weakening strength; the changing structure of cities also affected them as the compact and centralized 19th century city with its mass transit lines converging on the downtown, was a perfect environment for department

store growth.

Department stores first appeared in China at the beginning of the 20th century, the concept said to be introduced by expatriate Chinese living in Australia. Before 1949, there were four main department stores in Shanghai: Wing On, Sincere, Sun Sun and Yat Sun; the first two still exist today.

During World War II patriotic sentiment in China had led to the formation of a number of department stores specializing in locally made merchandise. This type of stores became the mainstay in China after the formation of the Communist state in 1949.

Both types of department stores have long had branches in Hong Kong; however Japanese department stores began to appear in the 1960s, and within a generation's time became the dominant force in the market. The Asian financial crisis of the late 1990s had resulted in the closures of some of these stores, but on the whole Hong Kong still has one of the world's most competitive retail markets. *From wikipedia.com*

SM Gamezone holds basketball competition

BASKETBALL IS THE MOST POPULAR sport in the country, and SM Gamezone is playing into its popularity by bringing the sport right into SM malls.

Basketball fans who can only dream of being a PBA or PBL player can act out their dreams in SM Gamezone's Grandslam Basketball Shootout and win prizes as much as P10,000 in SM gift certificates. Grandslam is a basketball arena where age is not a requirement.

Contestants are immersed in a unique game experience of basketball shooting at its purest. Players compete weekly, monthly and yearly in the inter-branch challenge called "Battle of the Champions". All one has to do is go to one of the SM branches: Southmall, Fairview, Manila, and Marilao and buy a ticket at affordable prices and beat the pre-

determined score.

Special prizes and trophies are awarded to players who emerge the best in 3-point range, free throw line and stop-and-shoot categories, while other guests thrill in excitement or watch their favorite local and foreign basketball stars on video. Fans of these basketball wannabes are also entertained on the sidelines during the mall tours where Gamezone gives out prizes and invites bands to perform, and if you come suited up looking like your favorite basketball player, you can win a gift pack and other freebies.

Like any basketball game, the Grandslam Shootout has three conferences. The first conference is from January to April. The second is from May to August, and the third is from September to December 2006.

Gamezone sponsors include Avesco, Jollibee, Gatorade, Globe Gentext, LA Gear, Tanduang and www.yehy.com.

It's not too late to realize your basketball dreams. For more information, call Beng Pedrosos of SM Gamezone at 800-3202.



HBC BEAUTY RETAIL CHAIN GOES FRANCHISING

In its bid to reach more consumers and entrepreneurs, HBC, the country's biggest one-stop shop store chain for beauty and personal care exclusives announced that it is now franchising its unique neighborhood beauty store concept. The announcement was made by HBC chair Dr. Rosalinda Ang-Hortaleza (second from left) at the company's launching ceremonies held at HBC's impressive headquarters in Quezon City which was attended by industry partners like the Philippine Franchise Association, Philippine Retailers Association, Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Salon Owners and Hairdressers Association of the Philippines, Spa Association of the Philippines and top celebrities like Kris Aquino, their premier endorser for the San San, one of the successful cosmetic brands carried by HBC. With Dra Hortaleza in photo at the launching are Susan Loyola (right), president - HBC, Inc. Bing Sibal-Limjoco (left), executive vice-president of Francorp Philippines and Samie Lim, chair emeritus, Philippine Franchise Association and chairman of Francorp Philippines.

Greenhills Shopping Center opens the new 'V-Mall'

THE NEWEST SHOPPING DESTINATION has just opened at the Greenhills Shopping Center (GSC).

Now known as V-Mall, this new shoppers' hub has risen from the ashes of the old Virramall.

Sporting a new look with five attractions from the SM group that include the successful Toy Kingdom chain, SM Appliance Center, Our Home, Watson's and Ace Hardware.

According to GSC general manager Joey Santos, V Mall still retains the computer stores that have been favorite destinations of technology lovers and the old toy shops that have been the Mecca of toy lovers and collectors from all over Metro Manila.

Sports shops like Ralph's Sports Shops and Planet Sport are also part of the new attractions.

The Great Eats Food Court which has several food outlets is at the third level together with Q-Power Station, an arcade and amusement center.

Old-timer Astrovision whose first store was at the old Virramall is back home via a 300-squaremeter shop.

Totally redesigned to make it more convenient for shoppers to go around, V-Mall boasts of a wider area as the escalator have been relocated to the sides instead of its old location at the middle of the mall. It also features a scenic elevator that allows shoppers to see the whole area on their way to the top levels.

Joey Santos disclosed that Goodwill Book-



store will open its newest branch here. To make it a total family destination, the dental, optical and beauty clinics will be back to serve the needs of families.

"They can come here to check on the affordable tech gadgets that includes MP3's for the teens, Ipods and other attractions that make us the complete shopping experience and perhaps we are the most complete shopping center in the whole Metropolis as we do have everything that the family needs under just one roof," Santos said.

Now connected to the new parking building of the GSC to make it easier for shoppers to walk from the parking area to V-Mall, it al-

so has branches of Dunkin Donuts, Milky Way, Krazy Krepe, Pho Hoa and a Chinese Deli among others in the mall's peripheral area.

Santos divulged that one of its most famous alumni is back as Cinderella opened another branch.

To prepare for the expected increase in the number of shoppers frequenting GSC on Sundays, the air conditioned chapel has been upgraded to 300 seats to accommodate the many mass goers coming to the shopping hub.

Aside from these, cafes and restaurants will soon open around this area to provide shoppers a place where they can rest and relax after hectic shopping day.

Greenhills Shopping Center Mayflower Festival (May 12 to June 5)

Feast your eyes on an impressive display of flowers and greenery, created by popular exhibitors and vendors. Marvel at what's new in gardening and landscaping. Reap inspirational ideas to beautify your home. Plus, be fascinated by over 1,500 stalls offering the hippest bags, clothes and accessories.

Truly, a cool shopping harvest awaits you at the bigger and better Greenhills Shopping Center.



Shop & Live!

Kids just want to have summer fun at SM

SUMMER KID-stuff makes a fashion splash with bright and bouncy swimwear from SM.

Capture fun in the sun in the most eye catching palettes - aqua blue, sunny yellow, luscious green, tangy orange, coral fuschia and sizzling red. Prints provide for a lot of poolside playtime - fun floral prints, summery swirls and sea creatures like star fishes, sea horses and corals.

The collection is available at the Childrens Wear Department of all SM stores.



Crafts fair, bazaar at Greenhills

THE 2ND PHILIPPINE CRAFTS Fair will be held simultaneously with the 13th Telecommunication and Accessories Bazaar at the Greenhills Shopping Complex.

The exhibit, which will run from June 9 to July 3, is organized by Prime Asia Trade Planners & Convention Organizers (Patepco) in partnership with the Philippine

Chamber of Handicrafts Producers and Exporters and the Korea Business Association of the Philippines.

Henry G. Babiera, Patepco president, said about 1,500 exhibitors are manufacturers, dealers, distributors, importers/exporters, and other traders from 18 regions of the country.

Supporting exhibitors are fine jewelry, antique furniture and furnishing, tribal arts, porcelains, jars and potteries, modern furniture and furnishing, crafts and hobbies, novelty items and corporate giveaways, leather goods, basketries, metal, wood and shell crafts, bed sheets and linens and food and delicacies, cell phones and accessories.



PERFECT game winners (from left) from SM City North Edsa Jhake Santos, Alex Ngoi Jr and Sammy Say Sy who received P100,000 each.

SM Bowling Cup perfect game winners

ALEXANDER NGOI JR, SAMMY SAY Sy, and Jhake Santos each scored 12 strikes in a row during the ongoing 5th SM Bowling Cup tournament to become winners of the competition's perfect game awards. These ace North Edsa bowlers were each awarded a P100,000 prize courtesy of SM Leisure Inc and the Mercantile Insurance Company of the Philippines Inc.

All perfect game winners during the tournament will each receive a

cash award of P100,000, with no limit on the number of times one can win the award.

The 5th SM Bowling Cup, the country's most prestigious bowling tournament, is ongoing until May 28 at the fully automated world-class SM Bowling Centers in Megamall, North-Edsa, Fairview, and Cebu. A brand new Nissan Sentra awaits the national winner; while monthly winners from each center will be award-

ed P20,000 each.

What makes this tournament even more rewarding is a grand raffle wherein all participants will have a chance to win exciting prizes. These include a Nissan Sentra, an all-expense-paid trip to Hong Kong Disneyland for a family of four, a home theater system, 29" TV sets, round-trip air fares to Palawan and Bohol, DVD players, color printers, and bowling bags.



Use your Globe G-Cash and double your chances of winning with 2 raffle coupons for every P500 worth of purchase.

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See mechanics posters for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 2415, Series of 2006.

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Mandarin Oriental Manila
Paseo de Roxas cor. Makati Ave., Makati City
Tel. 750-8888
www.mandarinoriental.com

RENAISSANCE

Renaissance Makati City Hotel
Esperanza St. cor. Makati Ave., Makati City
Tel. 811-6888 / Fax 811-6777
www.marriott.com

Palm Plaza

Palm Plaza Hotel
Pedro Gil corner M. Adriatico Sts., Manila
Tel. (02) 522-1000 Fax 525-8013
www.palmpalazahotel.com

Pearl Farm Beach Resort

Pearl Farm Beach Resort
Kapusanan Island Garden, City of Samal
Tel. (082) 221-9970 to 73
Manila: (02) 750-1896 / Fax (082) 221-9979

SOMERSET

Somerset Salcedo, Makati
H.V. dela Costa St., cor. L.P. Levista St.,
Salcedo Village, 1227 Makati City
Tel. 888-6668 Fax: 888-6655

SOMERSET

Somerset Millennium, Makati
No. 104 Aguirre St., Legaspi Village, 1229
Makati City
Tel. 888-0505 Fax: 812-7721

SOMERSET

Somerset Olympia, Makati
No. 7912, Makati Ave., 1220 Makati City
Tel. 812-1010 Fax: 818-8254

The Bellevue

The Bellevue Manila
North Bridgeway, Northgate
Alabang, Muntinlupa
Tel. (632) 771-8181 / fax (632) 771-0282
www.thebellevue.com

The Regent

The Regent Hotel
Elias Angeles St., Naga City
Tel. (6354) 4722626 / Fax (6354) 4722525

Camp John Hay Manor

Camp John Hay Manor
Loakan Road, Baguio City
Tel. (074) 446-0231 to 50

City Garden

City Garden Suites
1158A Mabini St., Ermita, Manila
Tel. 536-1451 Fax: 524-4844
Email: citygardenreservations@citygardenhotels.com

CSB HOTEL

CSB Hotel
Arelan Ave., cor. Estrada St., Malate, Manila
Tel. (02) 400-3333 Fax 400-7401

Dusit Hotel Nikko

Dusit Hotel Nikko
Ayala Center, 1223 Makati City Phil.
Tel. 867-3333 Email: dusitmn@disut.com
http://manila.dusit.com

Evercrest Golf Club Resort, Inc.

Evercrest Golf Club Resort, Inc.
Km. 72 Batulao, Nasugbu, Batangas
Tel. (02) 712-9293 to 98
Fax (02) 712-9299
Manila Sales Office 733-3822/733-9955

GARDEN PLAZA

Garden Plaza Hotel & Suites
1030 Belen St., Paco, Manila
Tel. (632) 522-4835 / fax (632) 522-4840

Grand Regal Hotel Davao

Grand Regal Hotel Davao
J. P. Laurel St., Lanang, Davao City
Tel. (382) 235-0888 / (382) 234-3858

INTERCONTINENTAL

Intercontinental Manila
1 Ayala Avenue, Makati City
Tel. 815-9711
www.intercontinental.com

Maclean Island Resort

Maclean Island Resort
Punta Engano Road, Lapu Lapu Cebu
Tel. (632) 231-0288 / Fax (632) 231-1688
www.shangri-la.com

MANILA PAVILION

Manila Pavilion Hotel
UN Avenue, Ermita, Manila, 1000
Tel. (632) 526-1212 / fax (632) 526-2552
www.manilapavilion.com.ph

Oakwood

Oakwood Premier Ayala Center
6th Floor, Glorietta 4, Ayala Center
Makati City, Metro Manila
Tel. (632) 729-8888 loc. 8101 Fax: (632) 728-0000 / oachua@oakwood.com.ph
www.oakwood.com

Royal Mandaya Hotel

Royal Mandaya Hotel
J. Palma Gil St., Davao City
Tel. (082) 225-8888 / Fax (082) 225-1888

Subic

Subic International Hotel
Subic Bay, Free Port Zone, Olongapo City
Manila: 243-2222 / F: 243-8852
http://www.subicohotel.com

SUMMER PLACE HOTEL

Summer Place Hotel
Km. 288 Marcos Highway, Baguio City
Tel. (074) 446-0560, 446-5100-01
www.SummerPlaceBaguio.com

Taal Vista Hotel

Taal Vista Hotel
Managed by Fuego Hotels & Properties
Km. 60 Aguinaldo Highway, Tagaytay City
Tel. (632) 886-4325, (6346) 413-1000
Email: tnavista@fuegohotels.com

The Marco Polo

The Marco Polo
CM Recto St. Davao City 8000
Tel. (082) 221-0888 / Fax (082) 225-0111
www.marcohotels.com

Waterfront Hotel Lahug

Waterfront Hotel Lahug
1 Salinas Drive, Lahug Cebu City
Tel. (6332) 232-6888 / Fax (6332) 232-6880
www.waterfronthotels.net

Waterfront Hotel Mactan

Waterfront Hotel Mactan
1 Airport Road, Lapu Lapu City, 6015
Tel. (6332) 340-4888 / Fax (6332) 340-5693
www.waterfronthotels.net

The Marco Polo Davao gets highest rating in Asia

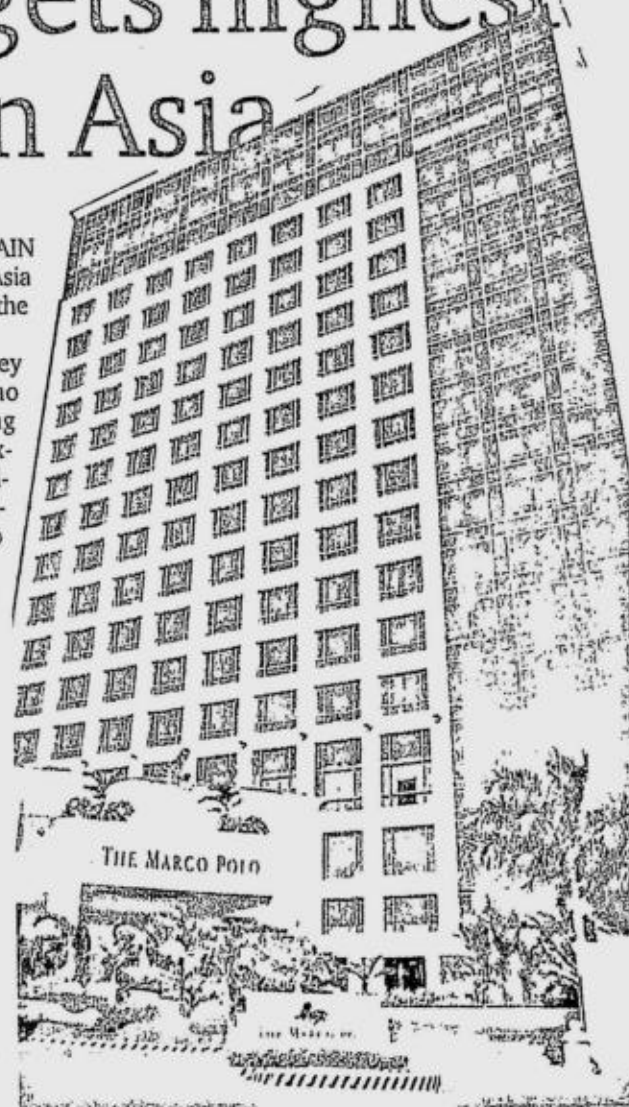
THE MARCO POLO DAVAO HAS AGAIN received the highest rating in Asia among its chain of hotels in Asia for the first quarter of 2006.

Recent guest satisfaction survey shows that The Marco Polo Davao continues to be the best performing hotel in terms of overall staying experience. The hotel was rated excellent not only in reservations, check-ins and accommodations, but also in food and beverage.

The survey was conducted by an international group via electronic mails.

Guest satisfaction over the hotel's quality of service was also proven by its consistent high occupancy rate.

The hotel has been a hub for businesses and functions. "With local and international guests coming back to stay at the hotel, we can only expect that the hotel will continue to maintain or exceed its current rating in the next months to come as it also pushes for even higher standards and better amenities," sales and marketing director Art Boncato Jr said.



Stress free party packages at City Garden Hotel

LET CITY GARDEN HOTEL MAKATI TAKE your stress away on your next party celebration. Party packages go for as low as P24,750+ inclusive of buffet menu or barbecue grill and discounts on drinks. Its wedding and debut packages come for as low as P59,000+ inclusive of a buffet menu for 100 persons, a cake, souvenirs, floral arrangements, and other amenities. Receptions venues may be held at its cozy, fully equipped function rooms or at the al fresco Roofdeck, with a wonderful view of the metropolis. Hold your party on a weekday and enjoy further discount of almost 10 to 30 percent from the package.

Those needing extra pampering, the Body & Face by Mendez at the hotel's Upper Penthouse level has special packages for individuals, couples or group. Try their Revitalizing Glow Package which comes with a choice of Salt Body Glow or Body Gommage and a choice of Swedish or Shiatsu Massage or their Rejuvenating Escape that gives you a choice of Combination or Aromatherapy Massage and a choice of Men's Facial or Oil Control Facial or Nurturing Facial.

City Garden Hotel Makati is located in Makati's restaurant strip at 7870 Makati Avenue corner Kalayaan Avenue, Makati City. For reservations or inquiries, please call (02) 899-1111, or its domestic toll free number 1-800-101-GARDEN (427336), or at www.citygardenhotels.com.

The Bellevue Hotel's Café d' Asie Restaurant has a new menu

THE DEFINITIVE DINING destination of the south, The Bellevue Hotel, continues to delight gourmands and food lovers in the Alabang and surrounding areas with new and exciting dishes at affordable prices. Café d' Asie is the hotel's main dining outlet that speaks of a warm and inviting ambiance perfect for Sunday family brunches, a lunch out with office mates or a working dinner.

Delicious appetizers such as Jade Prawn Cocktail Creole, piping-hot soups like Minestra Alla Genovese, healthy salads such as Salad Alla Livornese, filling sandwiches like The King of Club, scrumptious omelettes and pastas such as



Singaporean Omelettes, all-time Filipino favorites like Sinigang na Sugpo, tasty Asian specialties such as Fried Hokkien Mee, delectable Continental cuisine like Broiled Chilean Sea Bass Medallion and mouthwatering desserts such as Brizo de Mercedes in Jackfruit Coulis make for a flavorful gustatory experience.

Relax, unwind, cool down and get energized for another busy workweek. The Bellevue Hotel lets you enjoy your weekends to the utmost with Weekends at The Bellevue. For only P3,800++ per night, enjoy a deluxe room accommodation with buffet breakfast for two or P3,000++ with-

out breakfast during Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays of April 28 to July 30. Plus, get a 20 percent discount on the Barbecue Buffet at The Poolside. Other perks include free use of swimming pool and gym facilities at The Bellevue Spa Club, complimentary shuttle service to nearby malls and business districts, welcome drink at 20/20 Entertainment Bar, welcome fruit plate, two bottles of mineral water replenished daily, and local newspaper.

The Bellevue Hotel, southern Metro Manila's ultimate entertainment venue, gathers its night owls for two action-packed nights of vintage rock and roll featuring popular band The Bloomfields. On May 31, Bellevue's 20/20 entertainment bar fills with gaiety, dancing and singing from this fast-rising group of music-loving youngsters. Entrance fee is only P300. For inquiries, call 771-8181.

Lamb galore at Fiesta San Miguel



FIESTA SAN MIGUEL GIVES YOU MANY reasons to crave for Filipino cuisine as it offers, on the menu, a unique gastronomic feast.

True to Fiesta San Miguel's flare for Filipino food with a twist, the restaurant offers a la carte items for May and June featuring, the tender, lamb meat. Sample the "pinoy style" "Inihaw na Australian Lamb" with coconut barbecue sauce and served with pineapple

chutney and mashed sweet potatoes and the "Lamb with Adobo Sauce" with malunggay pesto, among other lamb dish preparations.

Let Fiesta San Miguel warm your appetite with its hearty soup dishes using different types of noodles matched with meat, seafood and vegetables. Highly recommended is the Japanese style and sour soup varieties on the menu. Available until June 2006.

People, Events & Products

NISSAN RX SERIES AT 14TH CONSTRUCTION SHOW CEBU

Nissan Rx Series models will be on display at the 14th Construction Show in Cebu, June 2-5, at the Cebu Trade Hall, 3/F SM City Cebu. The show is the longest and biggest running annual construction exhibit in the Southern Philippines. Photo shows the latest Nissan Rx Series UO1 Stand-up model. Its an electric (48V) each type; with load capacity of 1000-1500 kg, and its load center is 500 mm. The Nissan Rx Series is exclusively distributed in the Philippines by GLC Nissan Forklift Inc. For particulars on the 14th Construction Show Cebu, interested parties may call in Manila (02) 873-8202 or 1198 or 8876 or 9047; cel (0917) 8382183 or in Cebu (032) 232-3729 or 3740 or 412-9463 or (0916) 613-9179; or email constructionshow@glc-ut.com.



Extra Joss, the power powder

WITH ALL THE RESPONSIBILITIES AND activities we have to juggle, life can be quite overwhelming. Work has its challenges - demanding clients, tight deadlines and labor-intensive tasks. Of course we also need to pursue our hobbies, be rigid in our work-outs and enjoy going out. Even spending time with our family and friends can drain us of the energy we have left.

But all these aspects of our lives are important. Each should be dealt with the same intensity and focus. Thus, there's no choice, but to cope. Our body has to acquire extra boost, extra energy, extra power - Extra Joss Energy Drink.

This high-potency drink contains essential B vitamins - B1, B2, B3 and B6, Taurine and Ginseng. Vitamin B1 (Thiamine) helps turn carbohydrates into energy. While Vitamins B2 (Riboflavin), B3 (Niacin) and B6 (Pyridoxine), aid in the body's energy production by helping metabolize fats, carbohydrates and

proteins. Taurine, an amino acid that's concentrated in the brain and heart balances the energy given by the B vitamins. It helps regulate heartbeat, maintain stable cell membrane and inhibit the brain from over activity. It also contains Ginseng, popularly used to reduce stress, increase energy levels, improve memory and support the immune system.

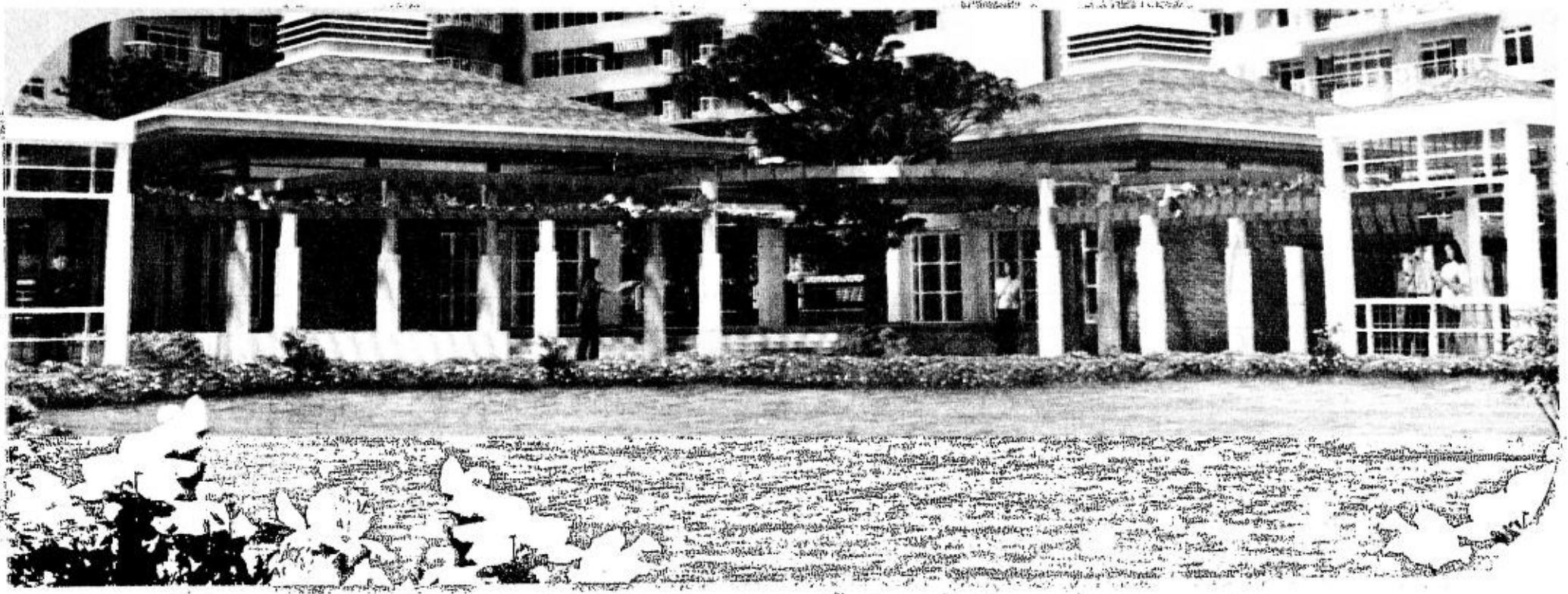
Extra Joss is great for anyone who wants extra energy boost. Those who are cautious of sugar intake can enjoy a glass or two because it's sugar-free. It's perfect even for those who are tight on the budget.

It's no wonder that in the short five years it's been available to the market, Extra Joss is now the favorite energy drink in the country. In fact, it has 70 percent of the market based on servings.

Stress and fatigue do not excuse you from doing the things you have to. Now, you can have that extra energy to live life to its fullest. With Extra Joss, power is within reach.

^{Li.}
Serendra

Suburban - onde



Acclaimed International Landscape Architect Designs Two Serendia

Finally, a neighborhood that has been called a gem. Anyone who has lived in the area knows that the community innovations they made in the past to re-evaluate the modern home and focus on something that used to get only perfunctory attention: the landscaping.

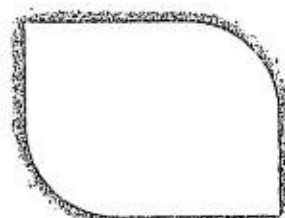
Metropolitan garden, land to be built, as the developer opted to tap into internationally acclaimed landscape architect Mr. Lehrer's trademark geometric style of Two Serendia.

As the preferred national landscape architect, designing for Thelma and Meg Ryan among others, Lehrer's expertise in landscape design is backed by an Ivy League education from Harvard University where she earned her master's degree in Landscape Architecture. Later on, she founded the popular Los Angeles based firm, Mr. Lehrer & Associates, gaining recognition for progressive landscape design that range from historic restoration projects to a list of Hollywood homes.

Acclaimed landscape architect, Lehrer employed a distinct geometric style mixed with effusive colonial foliage

For Two Serendia, Lehrer employed a distinct geometric style reminiscent of Robert Rauschenberg's painted landscape and recognized to all preference for abstract shapes mixed with effusive and colonial foliage. The use of bold patterns, curved forms, axial pathways and angled water elements offers a prudent touch of modernism which perfectly blends into the vibrant lifestyle of the community. Stylistically, Lehrer's design provides a sense of continuity consistent throughout the development, evidenced by the lush tropical greenery that loops through the grounds in graphic and directional forms.

Lehrer's design is deliberately reflective of the modern energy that has to be a result of the development features a distinctly modern garden space showcasing color and form that mirror the exceptional lifestyle inside Two Serendia.



Lofty Living Ideals at Two Serendia

Loft has always represented a living of the metropolitan lifestyle.

Although loft living once meant converting old industrial warehouses, it has since evolved into a style and approach to modern living space favored by those who value a dynamic and active lifestyle.

For Two Serendia, lofts are no longer quantifiable, but are a lifestyle that has to do with the fundamental qualities that complement the energy and vibe of urban professionals who are hardworking at the dynamic.

Community innovations will create their loft to offer a combination of design features that set off the exceptional lifestyle Two Serendia has to offer.

Two Serendia lofts will be designed to embody its own architectural features: high ceilings and tall windows that lend themselves to a light open feel of the space. But among other things, Community Innovations will create their loft to offer a combination of design features that set off the exceptional lifestyle Two Serendia has to offer its future residents.

No other urban development can claim to have the picturesque views of foliage and greenery framed outside their loft window, or the pulsing thrum of a vibrant city waiting beyond the fringe of Two Serendia's landscape.

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Suburban condo living in Bonifacio Global City

With garden, fire-pit, pathways, and rock walls, Serendra is the perfect space for you to enjoy the outdoors. It's a place where you can relax and enjoy the view of the city from the comfort of your own home.

Conveniently located in the Bonifacio Global City, the Serendra project is a great choice for you. You'll find offices, schools, and shopping centers just a few minutes away. You'll also find a great view of the city from the comfort of your own home. The Serendra project is a great choice for you. You'll find offices, schools, and shopping centers just a few minutes away. You'll also find a great view of the city from the comfort of your own home.

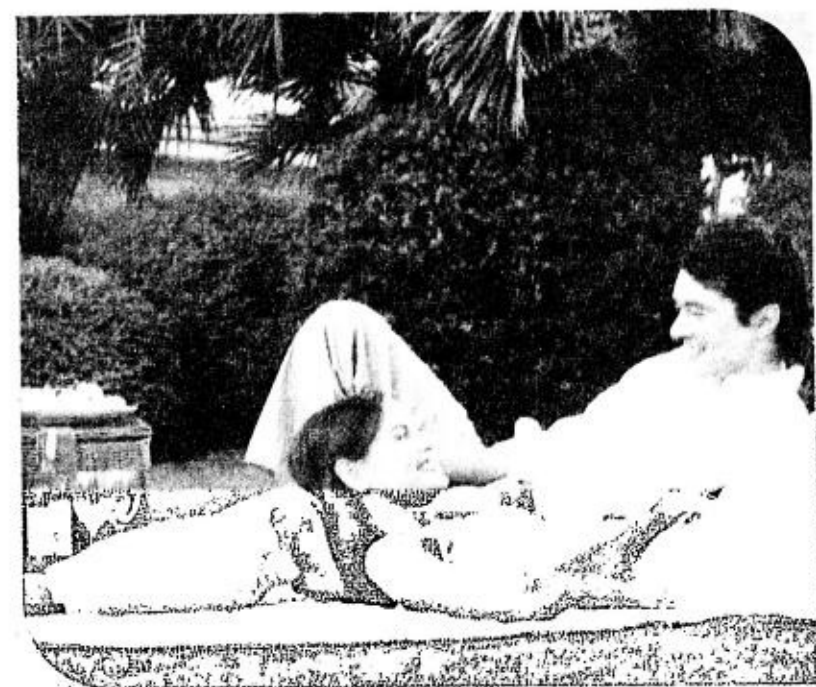
The Serendra project is a great choice for you. You'll find offices, schools, and shopping centers just a few minutes away. You'll also find a great view of the city from the comfort of your own home.

65% green. 100% fun.



La
Serendra

Defining Living Spaces for the Urban dweller



Senior City Innovation - Two Serendra is getting underway in a community innovation master plan by K&S Serendra.

The growing community of two Serendra is a landmark development in the urban landscape, offering a new way of living. It is a place where the urban dweller can find a sense of community and a place to call home. The development is a testament to the power of innovation and the ability to create a better way of life.

Two Serendra - A new way of living, a new way of life.

Two Serendra is a new way of living, a new way of life. It is a place where the urban dweller can find a sense of community and a place to call home. The development is a testament to the power of innovation and the ability to create a better way of life.

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Bringing the Urban dweller and Two Serendra's (Complementary Lifestyle)



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